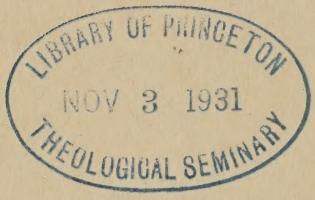

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SERVING THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD OF TO-DAY

ERRATA.

Page 59, line 34, *read* "1581" *for* "1569."
Page 61, line 12, *read* "George" *for* "Charles."
Page 72, line 33, *read* "recent" *for* "living."
Page 77, note at foot, *read* "Faith" *for* "Truth"
Page 79, *the line quoted should read* "Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour"
Page 120, line 31, *read* "1697" *for* "1687."
Page 135, last line of note, *read* "a" *for* "the"

SERVING THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD OF TO-DAY

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A BOOK FOR OFFICE-BEARERS AND CHURCH WORKERS ON TRAINING, EQUIPMENT AND SERVICE

BY
GEORGE A. SMILLIE, M.A.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE RIGHT HON. JAMES BROWN, M.P.

LONDON
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In Memoriam

ADAM BRYDON KEAY

INTRODUCTION

By the Right Hon. James Brown, M.P.

Office-Bearers and Church workers will welcome this book for its practical advice and for its deep religious tone. It comes at an opportune moment, when there is a strong desire in all the Churches to carry the Gospel of Christ into the homes of the people, to apply it to the problems of the age and to make it more than it is the instrument of world-wide redemption. A Church, rising to the demands of to-day, must needs have, in addition to an educated and trained ministry, lay workers who are alive to the needs of the age, who understand the nature of the problems to be faced and who are adequately equipped to make the most of the Church's great resources. What part must the Church itself play in providing such workers ? And what must church workers do to make themselves efficient ? These are vitally important questions in an age when efficiency counts for so much. Workers in all the Churches will be deeply grateful for the author's short, simple, but adequate statements regarding the organisation of the principal denominations, and for so much useful information to guide them in rendering the best possible service. I wish to commend a book

so easy and pleasant to read because so clearly and earnestly written. The style enforces the teaching—strong, simple, serious as befits the theme. It should be in the hands of everyone who aspires to be a good servant of our Lord Jesus Christ.

JAMES BROWN.

PREFACE

THE task of writing this book was laid upon me by the late A. B. Keay, founder of the International Association for Church Finance and Organisation, who was so well known in this and other countries for his unremitting labours in the promotion of the Weekly Freewill Offering System.

As a trained business man Mr. Keay strongly felt the necessity for the Church to increase its spiritual efficiency in order to meet adequately the world situation which confronts it to-day. To this end it must needs apply wisely and vigorously the ideals and methods of modern business to its own organisation and work, and, in particular, seek to give its office-bearers and workers an outlook on the world's needs and a knowledge of its own task and resources such as will inspire and equip them for rendering the best possible service.

While commissioning me to stress this latter necessity and present a reasoned case for the training of office-bearers and church workers, he also desired me to attempt the preparation of a Manual which would provide information on service in the Church such as would aid them in the task of training themselves.

This explains the form in which the book is presented. Part I and Part III discuss the need for a courageous and well thought out policy of religious education as a means towards raising the Church's spiritual efficiency. Part II forms a

Manual in which I have endeavoured to describe the task of the office-bearer and church worker from the same standpoint as that from which I myself, as a minister of the Church, regard my own task.

Many have given me valuable assistance, especially in my efforts to describe the polity and organisation of Communions other than my own. To these generous advisers, whose names appear on the opposite page, I desire to express my cordial thanks for their help and for the privilege of quoting from their works as the footnotes indicate.

In the actual preparation of the book I owe a great deal to the encouragement and ungrudging assistance of the Rev. W. J. Smith, M.A., Bo'ness, Chairman of Executive of the International Association for Church Finance and Organisation, who revised the manuscript and corrected the proofs. The arduous task of preparing the manuscript for the press was carried through by Miss J. R. Maciver, of the International Association, to whom I desire to express my deep indebtedness for her assistance.

The appeal of the book is, I realise, greatly strengthened by the fact that the Right Honourable James Brown, M.P., has kindly contributed a Foreword commending it to his fellow office-bearers, and my sincere thanks are accorded to him also for his interest.

I have further to record my indebtedness to the Rev. W. P. Merrill, D.D., for permission to reprint the verses with which the book commences.

G. A. Smillie.

St. Matthew's Church of Scotland,
Glasgow.

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CONTENTS

PART I

Efficiency in the Church

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE DEMAND OF TO-DAY	19
II.	THE CHURCH'S PRIMARY PROBLEM	29
III.	THOSE WHO MUST NEEDS BE EFFICIENT	40

PART II

Trained and Equipped—The Efficient Office-Bearer (*or* Church Worker)

I.	HIS SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTICS	55
II.	HIS VIEW OF THE AGE	67
III.	HIS CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH	80
IV.	HIS KNOWLEDGE OF HIS OWN CHURCH	93
V.	HIS PLACE IN THE WORK OF THE CONGREGATION	128
VI.	AS STEWARD AND ADMINISTRATOR OF CHURCH FINANCE	143
VII.	AS CHRISTIAN CITIZEN	157
VIII.	HIS CARE OF HIMSELF AS A CHRISTIAN MAN	166

Contents

PART III

Towards a Higher Efficiency

CHAPTER PAGE

I. PRESENT-DAY MOVEMENTS TOWARDS HIGHER EFFICIENCY IN THE CHURCH 177

i. The Church making itself aware of its Commitments, Obligations and Opportunities.

ii. The Church Member accepting his Responsibility to God as Steward of everything he is and has—Life, Time, Talents, Possessions, Spiritual Resources.

"Rise up, O men of God!
Have done with lesser things;
Give heart and soul and mind and strength
To Serve the King of Kings.

"Rise up, O men of God!
The Church for you doth wait,
Her strength unequal to her task;
Rise up and make her great."

WILLIAM PIERSON MERRILL.

Part I

EFFICIENCY IN THE CHURCH

CHAPTER I

THE DEMAND OF TO-DAY

The world in which we are living to-day is making ever increasing demands upon our efficiency. It is a world of gigantic forces mastered and applied with the most marvellous skill, a world of intricate, most delicate and precise machinery, a world in which industry has become so differentiated and specialised that even the ordinary worker must needs be an expert, a world of keen competition in which alertness and trained capacity alone guarantee the maintenance of one's position, and super-qualities are required in those who would excel, a world seething with unrest in which the fiercest antagonisms are pitted in mortal combat. Man's destiny in this new world, it is not too much to say, hangs upon the manner in which the forces which make for good respond to the challenge of the age's peril and opportunity, and succeed in bringing every phase of life into captivity to the obedience of Christ. In such a world efficiency counts supremely. It is the *sine qua non* of success, progress, attainment. It alone commands the future. Therefore in increasing degree it is efficiency that is required of all who would seek for themselves or for a cause a dominant and influential place in the world.

Towards enabling the citizen of to-day to meet this demand, statesmanship is directing all its energies. Both legislatively and administratively it aims at enlarging the citizen's opportunity of acquiring efficiency and of discharging the duties of life in the most efficient manner. Through the public services it provides him with all sorts of conveniences and facilities, clears his environment of perils and impediments, provides him with an elaborate education and furnishes him in the arena in which he toils with safeguards, inducements, and rewards. As a consequence, the citizen of to-day is rapidly becoming a specialist, a man of trained capacity who, responding to the demands which modern life makes upon him, is gradually being induced in the interests of efficiency to realise hitherto unattainable ideals.

This characteristic present-day demand and the revolution which it is producing is seen in every sphere of life, and nowhere with such vividness and aggressiveness as in the domain of industry and commerce. With such conditions as prevail to-day, industrial concerns and commercial ventures have little chance of survival, and none of success, unless they take pains to observe and apply the laws which make for efficiency. One of the newest of the sciences—"Applied Psychology"—deals with the discovery and application of these laws and, in the hands of the "Efficiency Engineer," is exploring the whole industrial and commercial field, producing in consequence, in many great undertakings, amazing, and indeed romantic, results.

Whereas, half a century ago trade and commerce were very largely in the hands of individual manu-

facturers and merchants and small concerns, to-day they are organised in large corporations, employing thousands of workers and operating in every part of the world, and the application in them of efficiency methods has reduced costs, cheapened output, increased production and brought undreamt of advantages both to the producer and consumer. And that is not all. Responding to the demand for, and inspired by the idea of efficiency, modern industry and commerce are reaching out after a new idealism. In many quarters, service has been given precedence over profit-making as the main end of business; employees, emancipated from the position of mere wage-earners to that of partners, share responsibility as well as profits; and a real rapprochement has been effected between capital and labour. In all industrial and business communities there is a growing desire after personal efficiency. Indeed nothing is more characteristic of the present age than the eagerness for training which is evinced by so many of our youth, in order that, trained and efficient, they may be equal to the demands which modern life makes upon them.

Another direction in which this characteristic modern demand is making itself felt is in the region of those ameliorative and redemptive activities which play such a large part in the modern world. Not so long ago, the relief of distress and the reform of social evils were very largely left to private enterprise and casual effort, but to-day the State is the great almoner and reformer, applying the latest achievements of science and the highest technical skill not only in remedying the effects

of evil conditions but in removing their causes as well. And so much are our voluntary organisations and enterprises dominated by the spirit of efficiency that no institutions and organisations are so smoothly and effectively run as our great hospitals and numerous relief associations. The dominant thought in present-day social service is that anything less than efficiency is unworthy of such a cause, and workers of all sorts are more and more seeking training or training themselves in order that the service they render may be as efficient as possible.

The demand for efficiency is pronounced also in the Church and is producing in every sphere of religious life the same revolutionary and transforming effects. For, as an institution whose task it is to produce a salutary influence in human hearts and win adherence to the Christian way of life, the Church is affected in a peculiarly drastic way by the changing conditions of the modern world. The new knowledge which the age possesses, the development of sciences which probe every mystery and bring all phenomena under the suzerainty of natural law, demands such a statement of the gospel message as will be in harmony with the newest categories and at the same time find its best and truest expression through them. The new conditions, problems and needs which characterise to-day, so different even from those of last century, call for a new attitude of mind, new methods of approach and new machinery with which to apply the Church's inspirations and remedies. Indeed, so entirely new have human modes, customs, conventions and even aspirations become, that in every sphere of her life and work, the Church,

moving with the times, is exerting strenuous efforts towards readjustment which may be taken as the measure of her desire for efficiency, as undoubtedly they are the effect within her of the age's demand for efficiency. But the Church is unlike all other institutions, in that her power lies not in merely human capacity and ingenuity but in the dwelling and working of a Spirit which is from above. Such things as organisation, adjustment, method and machinery, essential and important as they are, go but a little way to the solving of the problem of her efficiency. The Church's task in the world is to win men to God and to the Christian way of life, and that can only be effected by the Spirit of God Himself, working from within her, and reproducing His own life and spirit in the souls of men. Therefore, with a view to the fulfilment of this task there is nothing the Church needs so much as spiritual power, flooding men's souls and pervading every phase of her own life and activity. And the more spiritually-minded among her members, faced as they are by the tremendous problems and perils of the modern world, are longing for such a coming of power from on high with yearning which is as characteristic of our time as is its feverish seeking after readjustment and reorganisation. But the world is to-day in the grip of an all-pervasive and aggressive materialism, which has dulled and deadened the great heart of the Church with the result that there is not that spiritual responsiveness and energy of faith which prayerful men and women long to see, and consequently there has arisen a widespread and persistent attitude of challenge—also characteristic of the age—indicative of a deep

anxiety in many hearts, as to what it is that is wrong. Men know that spiritual power is available. The Lord does not tarry; He waits. Yet the Church is not filled, as men long to see her filled, with the Pentecostal power of her first days, with spiritual energies commensurate with the needs, opportunities and perils of the present. And so, under pressure of the age's demand for efficiency, this challenging spirit has arisen which, by its widespread persistence, shows how convinced men are that the future of the Church depends upon the maintenance and increase of her efficiency.

It will help to clarify our minds regarding the precise nature of the Church's problem and enable us to discern the steps which must be taken to increase her efficiency, if we consider the procedure which is invariably followed in solving the problems of efficiency in industry or business. The problem of efficiency is the same wherever it obtrudes itself and is solved by discovering and applying the *laws* which govern efficiency. These laws are laws of *method* in so far as they concern the manner in which any enterprise is carried through, and laws of *psychology* in so far as they affect the spirit of those engaged in the enterprise. Accordingly, when it is desired to increase the efficiency of any industrial or commercial undertaking, attention is paid not only to organisation and method but also to the aptitude, temper, understanding and enthusiasm of the personnel. The first endeavour is to eliminate waste in material and energy. If the problem is that of laying bricks or assembling a machine the movements and methods employed in the opera-

tion are studied and the method discovered by which the maximum number of bricks can be laid or the maximum number of machines assembled in a specified time. Five motions a brick instead of eighteen, with stooping and lifting eliminated, enabled two thousand bricks per man per day to be laid instead of seven hundred, and a minimum of necessary motions and operations and a well-thought-out method of assembling increased the output of a certain machine from fifteen machines per worker per day to sixty-six, an increase of 340 per cent. Waste of time and material and waste or dissipation of energy are the great enemies of efficiency, and the " Efficiency Engineer " by good organisation and proper methods seeks in the first place to eliminate these, so as to find the best, easiest and quickest way to the end desired. This is what we mean when we speak of " efficiency."

But the best, easiest and quickest way to any desirable end depends upon something more than machine-like precision in organisation and method. The capacity and spirit of the workers play just as large a part. An industry may have the best available plant, a perfect organisation and well-conceived methods of working; yet if its personnel is deficient in understanding and lacks foresight, interest, energy and goodwill, efficiency in any high degree in that industry is an impossibility. Alive to this fact, the best employers to-day do not hesitate to incur expense and trouble in seeking to inspire in their employees a real interest in their aims, and that *esprit-de-corps* expressing itself in what may be termed " team-work," without which no great undertaking can flourish. Their concern is to

capture the interest, rouse the enthusiasm and draw out and develop the latent energy of the personnel. In every body of workers there is a vast amount of energy lying dormant, and no small part of the problem of increasing the efficiency of any industrial or business concern lies in finding out how to awaken and utilise this undeveloped power. The solution is to inspire goodwill in staff and employees and to induce them to increase their own personal effectiveness, to develop initiative, to undertake responsibility and to throw their maximum energy into the enterprise.

This short study of the procedure of the industrial psychologist has brought us to the very heart of the Church's problem and revealed *the* task which of all the Church's tasks must be considered her primary one. The Church, as we have seen, is continually attempting to eliminate waste, and to conserve and concentrate her energies so as to produce in the best, easiest and quickest way those spiritual fruits which it is her function to nurture. The ceaseless toil of her consecrated thinkers in seeking to reinterpret the Gospel in the light of present-day thought, the catholic movement towards a League of Churches co-ordinating the Christian forces in world-wide service, great unions such as those recently consummated in Canada, in which diverse churches entered into a corporate fellowship, and in Scotland, which at last sees her disrupted Presbyterianism reunited in the ancient National Kirk, and the continual process of experiment with new ideas, methods, organisations and agencies so characteristic of to-day, show how alive

she is to her own defects and how strenuously she is seeking to overcome them. If it were simply a problem of reorganisation and the adoption of new methods there would be no real difficulty and no cause for anxiety, for readjustment, reorientation, new invention and new alignment are easy things for churches which have a mind to increase their efficiency. The real, because the more difficult, task of the Church to-day lies in so arousing and energising her personnel that she will become characterised by a more virile spiritual life and greater energy in the Christian enterprise. It is true that to-day in all churches there are vast numbers of consecrated and earnest people, inspired with the Christian sentiment and co-operating in the Christian enterprise to a degree that no former age has known; yet such is the low spirituality, indifference, unconcern and sheer worldliness of many others that the high endeavours of the wholehearted and eager are deprived of much of their value and as a consequence the Church's efficiency suffers.

In face of the demands of the modern world, its perils, opportunities and needs, the Church's spiritual power must be increased. If she is to beat back the attacks of Mammonism, Hedonism and Materialism and succeed in bringing every phase of life and every interest in life under the inspiration and power of Christ, there must be awakened, deepened and extended in her whole membership a virile, spiritual life. Not only must the number of the wholehearted and eager be increased, but her members must be so inspired to seek a higher spiritual efficiency that the untold resources of

latent power at present lying dormant and useless within her may be brought forth and thrown into the prosecution of her tremendous task. That is the Church's primary problem. She must so raise her spiritual efficiency as to be able to undertake adequately and successfully any task her Lord lays upon her.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH'S PRIMARY PROBLEM

THE key to the solution of the Church's primary problem lies in the conception of the ideal church member. For the problem is nothing less than that of reproducing in as large a proportion of church members as possible the ideal church member's salient characteristics. These salient characteristics are three in number.

(1) The ideal church member must needs be a *spiritual* man. He must be one who has entered into vital union with the Spirit of Christ and so become possessed of a spiritual experience in virtue of which he is able to maintain the high standard of the Christian life, exercise a far-reaching influence, and continue unwearying in service and enduring in trial. He must be one in whom the Spirit of Christ finds a channel through which to work.

(2) The ideal church member must needs be an *informed* man. He must be one who has a knowledge of the Christian facts and experience, the working of Christian principles and the way in which the teaching and spirit of the Gospel is permeating every realm of human thought and activity. He must be one who is acquainted with the main aims and ends of the Christian enterprise and of the general progress and activities of the Christian Church at home

and abroad. And, in particular, he must be one who knows thoroughly the organisation and enterprises of his own denomination and is conversant with everything which concerns the congregation to which he belongs.

(3) The ideal church member must needs be a *worker*. Whether old or young, rich or poor, cultured or simple, he must be one whose hand is turned to some form of Christian service. His service need not necessarily be a constituent part of church or congregational work, such as teaching a Sunday School class, singing in the choir or serving as an office-bearer. It may be service rendered apart from the church altogether in the ordinary work of life or in the service of the community. But of whatever sort it is, it will be rendered eagerly, without thought of the cost and with but one end in view, namely, that Christ's Kingdom may be advanced.

Since the Church's primary problem is to call forth in as many of her members as possible the characteristic qualities of the ideal church member, we have in the three salient characteristics just noted a clear indication of the three-fold direction in which the Church must apply her energies, if she would succeed in lifting the aggregate of her membership to a higher level of spiritual efficiency.

First, and fundamentally, she must concentrate upon the deepening and extension of the spiritual life of her people. The Church is essentially a spiritual institution, created to perform a spiritual task and dependent for life and energy upon

spiritual conditions and factors. Her ability to fulfil the high purpose for which she exists depends upon the presence within her of the Holy Spirit, who is hers only as He dwells in the hearts of her members. The Holy Spirit is always available and has always been in the Church, but in all ages the Church's members have relied too much upon their own wisdom and strength, upon their ingenious and masterful aims, methods, schemes and organisations. They have attached far too great importance to numbers, finance, material resources, famous leaders and influential committees ; and have forgotten the simple truth that it is not by might nor by power but by the Spirit of God that the Church prospers.

It is true that God at times breaks in upon His people, filling them with wonder and awe by the amazing manner in which He acts, as He transforms thought, attitude and activity and makes the life of an age new and rich and fragrant. But He never acts in any such marvellous way until His people really desire it, until in desperation they give up their perpetual scheming, their delight in machinery, their trust in human might, the rank wilfulness and disobedience of their hearts, and simply wait till He fills them with power.

Such a Divine infilling is the Church's greatest need to-day, but it can only be hers in proportion as such a gospel is preached, such worship offered, such prayerfulness cultivated, such homage to the Divine Will paid, and such a complete surrender made of all that thwarts the Divine Purpose as will meet the august demands upon which depends the coming of the Spirit in power. The gift of

God's Spirit is not a simple thing nor is it easily obtained. But it is so fundamental and essential for the increase of the Church's spiritual efficiency that there is nothing which the Church and her members should so diligently, patiently and prayerfully seek to obtain.

Secondly, if the Church is to develop a new efficiency her whole life and work must be more clearly conceived and vigorously prosecuted as an educational enterprise. As the Body of Christ, whom Clement of Alexandria truly called "The Educator," she is in the world to exercise an educational function. Her task is to lead men into that fulness and richness of life which is possible for them only in the power of God, which is manifest in Jesus Christ. To this end she must needs show them all the glory of God and the working of His Spirit everywhere throughout the universe, in the evolution of humanity, and in the spiritual experience of the soul, all with a view to developing in them power of personality and fitting them to live strong, full and joyful lives in the service of God and their fellows. For that task she has to her hand the instrument by which the race is being raised and civilised, by which the nations are training their citizens to meet the demands of this modern age and by which that efficiency is being acquired which is so prized in present-day industry and business. Education, scientifically conceived and painstakingly developed, is capable of the most marvellous results. In his "Science of Power" Benjamin Kidd shows how by controlling national education Germany and Japan transformed in a single generation the spirit, ideals and character

of their peoples. In the hands of the Church what might not be accomplished by a courageous and well conceived policy of religious education? Not only would it rid her of many inherent defects, but it would, without doubt, produce the most radical changes in opinion and custom both within herself and in society. Modern education puts at the Church's service her scientifically designed techniques and objectives, and it has become quite apparent along what lines progress must be made to attain such a perfected system of religious education within the Church as will raise the spiritual efficiency of her members.

Three things are specially demanded. (*a*) The grading of instruction so that teaching may be appropriate to the growth and interests of those taught—a principle germane to modern secular education but still insufficiently applied to religious education. (*b*) The projection of what is taught into practical life in order that it may be studied in action and given expression to in conduct—the modern "project" method by which instruction is related directly to experience and made to play an immediate part in the development of personality. (*c*) A co-ordinated and complete curriculum of study which will not only provide for the growth of the Christian man in the knowledge and love of God through study of the Scriptures and the practice of Christian living and service, but also throw open every field in which the Spirit is at work inspiring and enlarging an interest in every branch of the Church's tremendous enterprise, which comprises the training of the young, home evangelisation, the spread of the Gospel overseas and the

application of Christian ideals to social, industrial, racial and international problems. Such an application of sound teaching methods to so great a field of study would, without a doubt, produce far-reaching results, and develop a more intense and eager, because a more instructed and interested church life.

Of course, realms of knowledge so wide would demand life-long learning. But why should the Christian man not learn all his life? Are the activities and problems outlined above so trifling that they do not need to be studied after manhood's years have been reached? Is the human mind only capable of learning when it is immature? On the contrary, the objectives of religious education demand the most sustained pursuit, both on their own account and for the sake of the enlargement of personality which their mastery brings. And while the adult mind may lack to some extent the elasticity and quickness of the youthful mind, its enrichment through experience confers upon it that greater power of relating what it learns to practical life, which gives to adult education its peculiar value. Moreover, the Adult Education Movement, in this country and America, which is giving its ideals, methods and loyalties to the fuller equipment of many workers in political, social and religious life, shows that it is possible to carry education forward right through adult life. The Church in developing a more scientific system of religious education must needs give a large place to the education of the adult; and so meet the challenge issued to the Christian churches of the world in the Report on Religious Education of the Jerusalem Meeting

of the International Missionary Council, which met during Holy Week, 1928. Says this Report in one of its "Messages and Recommendations": "Certain churches provide commendable courses of instruction before admission to communion, but very few if any provide adequately for the continued growth in knowledge, as in grace, after reception into full church membership. . . . Adult religious education may well be envisaged by the Church as a distinct task."[1] Thus the Church must become more truly a *school*. It must be imbued with an intense teaching purpose. It must employ sound teaching methods in the operation of an exhaustive programme of religious instruction, adapted to all stages of intellectual and spiritual development with the end in view of developing in ordinary human nature the Christ-like personality.

Thirdly, if the Church would increase her efficiency, she must intensify and extend the volume of service which she renders to the community and to the world. She is in the world, as her Master was, to serve, and she discharges her function as Servant by providing ways through which her members render their service as followers of Christ, and by inspiring and instructing her members for the service which they render, as followers of Christ, in the world beyond the Church. Modern life and its problems, its highly developed social activities, its redemptive and ameliorative zeal, and the enthusiasm it displays in world-wide evangelism, has led to an enormous extension of the Church's activities in service. To-day all churches have great service departments equipped with elaborate and complex

[1] Reports, vol. ii. 238.

machinery designed to carry service to every point of need and opportunity at home and abroad. Machinery for service also characterises the modern well-organised congregation which displays a bewildering variety of agencies seeking all sorts of religious, educational and social ends. Yet notwithstanding this advance, which is impressively confirmed by a comparison with the Church of two generations ago, the evolution towards an adequately serving Church is still far from complete. Too many congregations are still organised for worship rather than for service. Scarcely any congregation can show a programme of religious, educational and social service really adequate for the territory in which it stands. And in all the churches far too large a proportion of the membership either cannot find a task or has no desire to serve at all.

Many reasons may be offered for the Church's tardiness in launching out upon a more heroic Christian service. Denominationalism is one hindrance. If the Church is to supply an effective ministry of service she must be united. All the resources at her disposal must be co-ordinated and the maximum effort brought to bear. Lack of means is another handicap. A service-ministry is a costly thing. Yet as Henry Sloane Coffin points out, " many a Church would find it easier to raise a larger budget, were it giving the community a larger service." But the chief cause of the Church's failure to render such a service as is adequate both to the need and opportunity, and to the spirit and example of Him who called her to serve, lies in lack of vision. Many people fail to see the spiritual value of any effort which is not definitely "religious,"

and so give the cold shoulder to much service which the Church might otherwise render.

A bold policy of extended service and more intense effort in serving, however, would not only enlist a larger number of church members in an enterprise which would be for their own spiritual benefit, but would afford such a demonstration of Christianity in action as would win the approval of a pragmatic age, which judges by results and is quick to respond to the challenging appeal of any form of service. The lines along which the Church must needs travel in extending and intensifying her service are easily indicated. Her major services must be increased and extended. For if she obeys her Master's call and adds to her overseas responsibilities, or embarks upon social work among the needy and in the dark underworld of our great cities, or concerns herself with the better instruction of youth, she will undoubtedly add to her powers. Two things, especially, she must seek to do. Acting through the congregation she must endeavour to undertake a more adequate religious, educational and social service territorially, and attempt to realise Dr. Chalmers' great ideal which envisaged each congregation exercising throughout the territory in which it stands an all-pervasive and spiritually beneficent ministry of service, bringing the Christian message, influence and spirit in the most personal way into contact with every human interest and need. And in the exercise of her teaching function she must provide instruction and guidance for her faithful members in the application of Christian ideals to social, industrial, racial and international problems. Thus, having within her-

self facilities for service sufficient for all her members, and inspiring and directing such as carry her service forth from herself into the world, the Church will become the true embodiment of Him who said, "I am among you as he that serveth."

Of these three endeavours which make up the Church's primary task, that which aims at deepening and extending the spiritual life of her people is fundamental, because it is the end common to all the Church's quests. But as a factor in raising the Church's spiritual efficiency it is no more essential than the other two. The work of the Holy Spirit in awakening and quickening the Church is bound up with and conditioned by the efforts which the Church puts forth in religious education and Christian service, and the reason why the Spirit seems to tarry is because the Church falls short in the exercise of her teaching function and in the development and extension of her service.

Two simple questions put this conviction beyond the need of proof. Why does the Church lose so many of her adolescents? Why is the spirituality of so many of her members low? The answers elicited are the same. Because she fails to capture their interest. Because she fails to bind them to an engrossing task. Spiritual conviction—the basal element in spiritual life—becomes rooted in the soul not simply as the result of direct spiritual awakening, but also through the growth of interest when the mind is enlarged and enriched by religious education, and through devotion to such a task as throws the worker back upon the guidance and support of God. Undoubtedly, therefore, the Church

would enjoy a far larger experience of the saving power of God that is in Christ Jesus, if she pressed on more vigorously not simply in her evangelical enterprise but towards an educational awakening and a greatly enlarged and intensified service.

(The argument pursued in this chapter is continued and brought to a practical conclusion in Part III, Chapter I).

CHAPTER III

THOSE WHO MUST NEEDS BE EFFICIENT

THE demand which modern world-conditions are making for increased efficiency in the Church has thrown into strong relief the indispensable part which lay leaders and workers play in the task of the Church. In the first days of the Faith, before the distinction between clergy and laity arose, all offices of the Church, spiritual as well as administrative and eleemosynary, were almost wholly discharged—for there was no other way of doing it—by earnest, able and energetic men in the same voluntary fashion as characterizes the work of office-bearers and church workers to-day. But as the number of church members increased the Church became a highly organized institution, whose offices and affairs demanded in time almost exclusively the service of dedicated and devoted men who gave their whole time to her service. For these, powers of a divine nature and a divine origin were claimed, and they became marked off as a special order. Consequently not only the spiritual offices of the Church, but her government, the administration of her affairs and the management and direction of the service she rendered, gradually ceased to be discharged by laymen, with the result that the position

in the Church of the laity as distinguished from the clergy became depressed, and the true place and function of the lay leader and worker was largely lost sight of. Yet despite this adverse process which the hierarchical form of church polity, the sacerdotal view of the ministry, the catholic doctrine of the sacraments and the mediæval theory of grace conspired to render inevitable, the laity provided the spiritual dynamic in every great movement by which the Church was revived and her spiritual power extended. This we see most signally demonstrated in the Franciscan Revival, in which the common people so responded to the humane preaching of the simple gospel that means had to be found in the Third Order of the Franciscans, the Tertiaries, of enabling them to live in poverty and goodness without withdrawing like the other "religious" from the world.

The Middle Ages showed many such associated lay orders, as well as spiritual brotherhoods outside the Church, whose activities helped to break down the barrier between laymen and clergy and partially restored to the laity their proper place in the Christian enterprise. As the Reformation approached, there was a remarkable growth of what has been called non-ecclesiastical piety, which was quietly determined to bring within the sphere of the laity a great deal that had been supposed to belong exclusively to the clergy. The practice of Christian charity, for example, passed more and more under lay management, and in the numerous brotherhoods which at that period sprang up in many parts of Europe, a spontaneous religious life was developed which owed nothing to clerical direction. Indeed

the Reformation merely completed an emancipation which had been long in process and restored to the laity—in some of the Reformed Churches more than in others—a place which had not been enjoyed since the earliest days of the Christian enterprise, calling laymen into closest co-operation with the clergy, not only in the administration of the Church's temporal affairs and in the distribution of her charity, but in the discharge of her more spiritual functions of teaching, discipline and oversight.

In the modern world the principles and tendencies of the Reformation are being worked out to their logical conclusions. Consequently the place and function of lay leaders and workers in the Church is still undergoing progressive definition and enlargement. Even the hierarchical churches of the Reformation have become invaded by the modern democratic spirit which is calling forth in them new machinery and is assigning a larger place and function to lay representation in ecclesiastical courts and assemblies. And in all the Reformed Churches there has sprung up an amazing complexity of enterprise and agency, providing channels by which the ministries of the Church are carried by lay workers to the service of every interest and the succour of every need.

To-day the layman has come into his own in the prosecution of the Church's enterprise, and in no former period has it been so recognised as it is to-day how much the prosperity and progress of the Church depend upon his fidelity and zeal. Indeed in respect of the problem which, we have seen, primarily concerns the Church in the modern

world, *viz.*, that of raising her own spiritual efficency, the conviction has become axiomatic that the part which falls to the laity in the solving of this problem, and especially to the lay leaders and workers of the Church, is of even greater consequence than that which falls to the ordained ministry.

One or two simple considerations will help to make this conviction ours.

1. Although the clergy, the spiritual leaders of the people, are as a rule highly trained and well equipped for their service, and discharge functions without which the spiritual health of the Church could neither be maintained nor increased, they are a very small fraction of the total membership compared with the office-bearers and workers. In the Church of Scotland, while there are 3,500 ministers (active and supernumerary) to a membership of 1,284,449, there are 50,730 office-bearers, 45,877 Sunday School teachers and numerous other workers. In the Wesleyan Methodist Church while there are 2,562 ministers to a membership of 517,505, there are 18,870 local preachers, 18,964 class leaders, 116,144 Sunday School officers and teachers. These figures represent such an overwhelming preponderance in respect of lay leaders and workers as shows, in a way which must strike the imagination, how great is their influence, active and potential, in the service which the Church renders.

2. Then, although the ordained ministry in preaching the Word and discharging the duties of the pastoral office exercises an influence which is incalculable, ministers seldom enjoy that close

contact with everyday life and that intimate knowledge of ordinary men and women which is possessed by laymen. The exigencies of the ministerial office, its intense concentration upon one side of life, compel the minister to live a little apart; and while he enjoys by virtue of his cure of souls an intimacy with many which is his alone, many contacts in the ordinary course of the daily round are denied him, with a consequent limitation of his knowledge and influence. This is so, even in respect of those directly under his ministerial care. For while as preacher and pastor he forms contacts of the most vital kind with old and young, the elder who faithfully visits his district, or the Sunday School teacher who loves and prays over her class, has even better opportunities of establishing such intimate personal contacts. These contacts, charged with spiritual possibilities, are essential in providing channels for the working of God's spirit, and the fact that a preponderance of opportunity for their establishment lies with the lay leaders and workers shows again in a most impressive way how great is their influence, active and potential, in the service which the Church renders.

3. Again, although the professional ministry may have a larger theoretical knowledge of the problems of life and the manner in which the Christian ideal must be applied to them, the lay leaders and workers are actually up against these problems and form the spear-head, the actual effective instrument, by which the Christian solution is being applied to them.

How many ministers, let us ask, have actual knowledge gained from intimate experience of the

inside of a modern engineering shop, or the other side of the counter in a great department store, know at first hand the rough camaraderie and boisterous badinage of a coal mine, or are able to appraise—because they have been compelled to—the conventions, ethical standards and daily temptations of those who work in the law courts or the Stock Exchange? While the man in the pulpit is invaluable as a spiritual guide and as a purveyor of inspiration and encouragement in applying the Christian ideal to life, it is the devoted men in the engineering shop, the department store, the coal mine, the law courts and the Stock Exchange, who have the actual work to do. And the fact that the real application of the Christian solution to life's problems lies so exclusively in the hands of the Church's office-bearers, workers and ordinary members, shows more vividly than ever how great is the part they are called upon to play in the service which the Church exists to render.

Such a recognition of the indispensable part which it falls to the Church's office-bearers and workers to play in the ordinary service of the Church, and especially in meeting the demands which the modern world is making upon the Church, will bring home to all thoughtful minds how essential it is that the Church's lay leaders and workers should not only maintain but increase their capacity for rendering effective service. If any within the Church to-day must needs be efficient, it is they. For, in a unique degree, upon their faithfulness, capacity and zeal depends the possibility of the Church attaining that high efficiency which must be hers, if she would

adequately meet the demands which the needs and problems of the modern world are making upon her. Two reasons in particular give urgency to this question.

1. In the first place the highest possible efficiency is demanded of all who are enlisted in the Church's service, because of the extreme difficulty—not to say peril—of the present situation as well as the rich and hopeful opportunity which it presents. Never before has the Church been faced by a more critical prospect, and the slightest slackening of effort will, without a doubt, precipitate irretrievable disaster, while intensity and self-sacrificing faith will as certainly carry the Church irresistibly onward.

The world is to-day the arena of a tremendous conflict in which that spirit which ignores God, interpreting life in terms of mere naturalism, and glorying in human self-sufficiency, is at grips with faith and hope and love. Materialism, a monstrous, hydra-headed menace, checks the Church's advance at every point. Allied to a presumptuous philosophy which claims to speak with the authority of science, it is working with corrosive effect in every system of thought and conduct, disintegrating the older religions of the world and preparing the way for the emergence of a sinister civilization. As the dominant spirit in the systems by which commerce and industry on the world-scale are ordered to-day, it is breeding social ills and inter-racial antagonisms which threaten not only the peace of mankind but also the whole religious attitude to life. Congenial as it is to an age in which human ingenuity and skill

have won a high degree of mastery over nature, and have placed at man's disposal the most marvellous powers and facilities, it is expressing itself in present day life—not excluding the life of the Church—in a self-sufficiency and indifference which, coupled with the excitement and rush of the age, is inimical to the life of the spirit and detrimental to the Church's work and progress.

But, menacing as materialism is in the modern world, it is by no means dominant. Other and stronger forces are winning their way everywhere, developing, in industry, commerce, literature, art, national and international life, a Christian conscience which is setting up absolute standards, rooting up old and evil customs, changing habits of thought and slowly and progressively bringing the life of man under the rule of Christ. Never before has there been such a readiness to respond to spiritual ideals. Even materialism, in order to win a way for itself, has been compelled to profess itself humanitarian, and has stocked its armoury with sentiments and aims, borrowed from the Christian religion, which make a strong appeal to the modern mind and give a specious aspect to the philosophy with which they are allied. This exploitation of the idealism of the age, which is the root cause of the prevalent unrest, constitutes the chief danger in the propaganda of materialism. But it is a danger which the Church confronts with equanimity rooted in a great hopefulness, for as custodian of the divine Gospel she has something better to offer the World than a negative philosophy and the dreams of a borrowed idealism. She offers to present-day thoughtfulness a reasoned and reason-

able faith ; to the age's need for moral guidance the absolute standards of Christian morality and the power in which to realise them ; and to the demand which all men are making for reality supreme realities attested in the experience of life. The Church possesses precisely what the age needs. She has at her disposal the boundless resources of the Spirit, and all that is required for her complete victory is a higher efficiency in those whose task it is to bring these resources into action.

2. Further, the new knowledge which science has given to this age, together with the increasing complexity of the task with which the modern world confronts the Church and of the machinery evolved by the Church to accomplish this task, makes imperative a high standard of efficiency in lay leaders and workers.

The effect of the prevalent scientific temper, which desires to know the natural antecedents of all phenomena, is found in youthful and adult minds alike, in a questioning spirit which refuses to accept literally much that is in the Bible, suspects the reality of spiritual experience and doubts the practicability and redemptive value of the Gospel. This does not make the task of the elder in his district or the Sunday School teacher in her class any easier, and it demands, in those who would adequately fill these offices, a certain assurance of faith which is the fruit of experience, and at the same time an intelligent acquaintance with the views of the best scholarship on the nature of the Bible, the progressiveness of revelation and the authority of Christ.

Those Who Must Needs be Efficient

The social unrest of the times and the absorption of the masses generally in schemes of economic betterment have also increased the difficulty of the Church worker's task. For while the Gospel has lost none of its simplicity, and indeed still derives much of its efficacy from its simplicity, it has to be proclaimed to-day in conditions which demand a great deal more than the simple exposition of its message. For example, to carry the Evangel successfully into an industrial area requires, in missioners and mission helpers alike, a sympathetic knowledge of the worker's social aspirations and his social, industrial and political theories, as well as of his moral and spiritual needs, and also a trained facility in presenting the Gospel in such a way that it will satisfy his aspirations, supplement or rectify his theories, and meet his needs.

As the recent campaigning in Scotland has shown, a primary requisite in present-day evangelism is not only the specially trained missioner, but the trained helper who in the open-air crowd and also in the workshop and mine, will defend the Faith of the Church and the Church herself as readily and skilfully as the disciple of Communism defends and propagates the teaching of Karl Marx.

Likewise, the Church's overseas enterprise, because of the dynamic part it is playing in the training of native races and the evolution of a new world civilisation, as well as the bewildering complexity of its operations in all quarters of the globe, constitutes another realm of the Church's work which demands painstaking effort in those who would effectively serve its interests. To give really valuable support to those at work in the field, the

helpers at home must know the conditions in which those who represent them are labouring, the problems they are facing, their progress and their needs. In order to effect a Foreign Mission advocacy so well informed as to enlighten and inspire those whom it seeks to convince, such advocates of the cause as the congregational Foreign Mission convener or the leader of the G.A., must needs make themselves familiar, not only with the actual work which their own Church is doing, but with the more general aspects and problems of world-wide evangelism. Indeed, such problems as those arising out of racial contacts, the disintegration of the old religions, the emergence of new nationalistic aspirations with their mingled menace and hope for the future, the world-wide spread of modern industrialism, and the uprising of autonomous native churches, each playing its part in the evolution of a new national life, present fields of study which must be entered and diligently explored by all who would increase their efficiency as auxiliaries at home in the work of the Church overseas.

Again, the multiform nature of the Church's operations as a whole, and the intricacy of her machinery, demand in those who administer her affairs and raise and expend her finances a high standard of acquired efficiency. The Presbyterian elder of the Church of Scotland, for example, who sits in Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly, should possess a wide and varied knowledge of ecclesiastical government and administration, embracing a perplexing variety of courts and departments which superintend the multifarious operations of the Church at home and abroad. The Wesleyan

leader, equally with the Presbyterian deacon, entrusted with the working of the Freewill Offering System in the congregation, should have such a knowledge of the Church's enterprises at home and abroad as will enable him, not only to frame a proper budget, but also to explain it to the members in such a way as to arouse their interest and stimulate their generosity. Thus the conditions in which the Church is working to-day —the intellectual categories of the age, the new knowledge and the questioning temper—the social aspirations of the masses, their economic and political theories, and the attitude of alienation and suspicion, in which so many of them stand—and the multiform nature of the Church's operations, coupled with the intricate machinery with which she performs them, all combine to demand from church workers to-day the highest possible efficiency.

This imperative demand, to which the peril and opportunity of the age and the complex nature of the Church's task and machinery give such emphasis, will doubtless raise a protest in many quarters. How can men and women, it will be asked, whose service is voluntary and who can only give their spare time to the Church's service, meet such a demand? Will it not discourage many willing workers and cause them to withdraw their help, if the necessity for a high standard of efficiency is unduly stressed? Those who express such fears, however, should ponder the reasonableness of the demand. Surely, if men take such pains to make themselves efficient in business, politics and sport, those who are enlisted in the most sublime of

enterprises should take even greater pains? The service of the Church is the service of Christ. It is done out of gratitude. It seeks to honour Christ. Therefore if Christ is to any man Master and Lord, that man will desire to give Christ his best. And it is no more than his best that Christ demands. He never asks a man to give *more* than that. But it is for *that*—for nothing *less* than that—that He is asking, as He speaks in the demand, which the present age is making, for the highest possible efficiency in all who serve in His Church.

Part II

TRAINED AND EQUIPPED—THE EFFICIENT OFFICE-BEARER (*or* CHURCH WORKER)

CHAPTER I

THE OFFICE-BEARER'S SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTICS : HIS STANDING AS A CHRISTIAN MAN, HIS OBJECTIVES, EQUIPMENT AND CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS

An office-bearer in the Christian Church is placed in a position of unique opportunity alike for service and for leadership. In that position he is honoured, and exercises his influence solely in virtue of what he is as a Christian man, in virtue of his Christian character, equipment and experience. That is why so many shrink from the office-bearer's responsibility and refuse to accept office in Christ's Church. Rightly or wrongly, they feel that they do not possess the peculiar capacity requisite for such a task, that even although one can point to gifts and graces which seem to prove their fitness, they are scarcely Christian enough.

It is the reason, also, why sincere men and women always urge their personal unworthiness for a spiritual vocation. For who is ever satisfied with himself as a Christian man ? It is not by right or merit that it is given to anyone to serve in Christ's Church, but only by the grace of God. With the Apostle, every honest follower of Christ says in his heart, " I am not meet to be appointed to such an office." Yet when necessity is laid upon one, as it was laid upon the Apostle, there is no alternative

but to take up one's task as the will of God for him, and to strive daily by the grace of God to be worthy of it, yielding oneself absolutely to Christ in a constant endeavour to serve in the appointed sphere as efficiently as possible.

What, therefore, should the office-bearer, who desires to be efficient, seek to realise in himself? What spiritual characteristics should increasingly become evident in him, as he gives himself in earnest to his task?

I

In the first place, the office-bearer should have a real Christian experience. He may not be able to point to any mystical or tumultuous happenings in his spiritual history, but nothing in all the world should mean just so much to him as his faith in, and his determination to serve, Christ. With the Apostle he should be able to testify "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed unto Him against that day. And I thank Him . . . that He hath counted me faithful, appointing me to His service." Such an assured and personal faith, with the interests and practical activities which accompany it, should make the Christian life a very real thing to him. For, rejoicing, as he does, in the forgiveness of sins, believing in the providential ordering of life, practising the Presence of Christ, and relying upon the working of the Divine Spirit, everything for him should have spiritual reality and spiritual value. He himself should be a spiritual man, whose deepest desires have found their joyful

satisfaction, and who, daily increasing in the knowledge of God, is, at the same time, growing in likeness to Christ, and has, therefore, a great wealth of happiness, strength, courage, hope, and Christ-like love at his disposal, to share with others.

Only men and women with such experience as that, have a right to positions of trust in Christ's Church. Their Christian experience constitutes their "letters patent." It confers upon them the power of rendering Christian service. Without it Christ cannot work through them. Without it they can exercise no Christian influence. Without it they can have neither comfort, nor joy, nor satisfaction in the occupancy of their offices. A Christian experience is a *sine qua non* for the *efficient* office-bearer; and it must be his constant endeavour to enlarge and deepen his Christian experience.

II

Secondly, the office-bearer should direct his energies towards well defined objectives. Like Cromwell's Ironsides, he should know what he strives for, and love what he knows. His deepest desire should be to advance the purposes of God, to aid in the realisation of all that is implied in the petition, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Accordingly, he should regard his service as instrumental for the fulfilment of the Divine purpose, as the medium through which he co-operates with God in His work. He should think of it as his *calling*, his vocation, the will of God for him, the task in fact which he has been sent into

the world to do—a task which he dare not shirk nor perform carelessly.

His sense of vocation should play a large part in the development of his spiritual experience, steadying his conduct and bringing out the virile qualities of his character. For when competing interests strain his loyalty, or he is tempted by vices of the world or his own love of inglorious ease to slack off or play the deserter he will say, "I will be true to my task. My task must have my first consideration." And saying that habitually, he will acquire decision of mind and constancy in action, indeed all the strength of a man who has an abiding purpose in his life.

Such a sense of vocation is essential in every office-bearer or church worker who would be efficient. Anyone may develop it. For, no matter how handicapped a man is, how restricted his sphere, how meagre his talents, how humble his standing, he has something in and through which he can co-operate with God—something which God can use. "There is a call in the world for the things which you can do," D. L. Moody said in the hearing of the young medical student, W. T. Grenfell. His words opened the eyes of the future Doctor of Labrador to the glory of co-operating with God, and gave him his vocation in life. The same words apply to everybody. God's call for the things which a man can do gives him his calling.

The ultimate aim of Christian Service is to make all things new, through the establishment of the reign or kingdom of God in the world, an aim which can only be achieved by the saving and progressive sanctification of men. The Church

exists for the sake of this process. Her task is to awaken, quicken and foster spiritual life, to do what our Lord had in view in all the service which He rendered when here in this world. His aim was to lead men through faith into fellowship with God, to awaken in them spiritual desires, to give them, as He said, life, vital energy in their spirits, fulness of joy in the experience of living.

The office-bearer should have the same supreme objectives. In all that he does he should reach out for spiritual results. His service should be evangelical in intention. Its ultimate aim should be to lead men, through faith in Christ, into the full and joyful life of the Kingdom.

Much of his energy, it is true, will be expended on tasks which are not directly spiritual. But in the most secular forms of service in which he engages, he should always have before his eyes the ultimate spiritual aim. He should, accordingly, never make the mistake of regarding the Church's social and recreational service as an end in itself. Nor should he fancy that his function as an office-bearer or worker in Christ's Church is fulfilled by simply discharging the routine duties of his office or task.

Whatever rôle he fills in the Church's service, whether he be a Sunday School superintendent or teacher, a member of the choir, a district visitor, a deacon or steward, in all his activities, within the Church and outside it, his supreme aim should be to advance the interests of Christ in the souls of men and the life of the world. This has never been better put than in the Scottish *Second Book of Discipline* (1569), in its section on the eldership,

in which it says : " As the pastors and doctors should be diligent in teaching and sowing the seed of the Word, so the elders should be careful in seeking the fruit of the same in the people "—a maxim applicable to all grades and kinds of service in the Church. Not elders only, but every sort of office-bearer and church worker should have a spiritual aim. He should be careful in seeking the fruit of the Word.

III

Thirdly, the office-bearer should be adequately equipped for the service which he renders. His equipment should be intellectual, practical and spiritual. It should comprise such a knowledge of Holy learning as will deepen and enrich his own spiritual life; such a familiarity with the application of Christian ideals to life, and with the operations and enterprises of the Christian Church as will make him a man of wide and informed interests, and enthusiastic in his support of the Church's enterprises at home and abroad; and such a theoretical knowledge of his own task as will with practice make him thoroughly efficient in it.

This intellectual equipment will be supplemented by the innate and acquired faculties of mind and heart which he brings to the discharge of his duties. These will include his own natural talents, and such expertness as has come to him in serving as an elder, Sunday School teacher, scoutmaster, or leader in adult work; and should also comprise certain special faculties of mind and heart which are particularly

requisite in Church work to-day and which often demand much effort to acquire.

One of these is *openness of mind*, the ability to appreciate sympathetically what is new and progressive. "One of the most fatal enemies of effective service," says H. E. Fosdick, "*is the belated mind*, which while it feels unselfishly has not caught up with new ways in which efficient usefulness must work. Many people of sincere good will are spoiled in their service because they are behind the times."[1]

Another is what Charles Fox called *a sense of all conditions*, that sympathetic understanding of the lot or point of view of other people which is gained by casting aside prejudice, the sense of superiority and class feeling, and entering imaginatively into their circumstances, thoughts, aspirations and needs. "I have prayed," said Fox, "to be baptised with a sense of all conditions that I might be able to know the needs and feel the sorrows of all."

And added to these should be such qualities as are needed for leadership and team work, e.g., considerateness, adaptability, patience, brotherliness, good humour, readiness to give way when occasion requires. The Church's service is very largely co-operative, and requires leaders who can lead, and workers who will work together.

His spiritual equipment, however, should be the office-bearer's greatest asset. For what he accomplishes of any moment in the service which he renders, will depend upon what he is as a spiritual man. It will be the outcome of his ability to lay hold of the spiritual resources which are his in

[1] *The Meaning of Service*, p. 162.

Christ, and also of the powers which are inherent in himself as a spiritual personality.

The resources which are his in Christ are infinite. He has but to lay hold of them—or better, yield himself to them, to be equal to any demand which his service makes upon him. Like the Apostle, he can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him. And as he draws to himself the gathered experience of the years, and is mellowed through the sanctifying processes of life and made strong by the sustained discipline to which he subjects himself in the course of his Christian service, his Christian quality—the spiritual temper of his mind, the breadth of his sympathies and the strength of his faith—will become more and more pronounced, with a consequent increase of power in service. Nothing so enables a man to advance the interests of Christ as a sanctified personality. What such an acquisition can effect in the lives of other people is vividly shown in Stanley's noble testimony to Livingstone's influence upon him during the few short weeks they were together in Central Africa. "He did not attempt to convert me by preaching or exhortation, or repeated and consistent arguments," wrote Stanley. "He only lived out in his daily conduct the divine truth which he taught to the simple-minded Africans. His daily prayers, his self-control, his serene and undisturbed trust in Providence; his reverential and habitual reading of the Bible, his imitation without any pretension whatever of his Master's disposition—so gentle, so kindly, so forgiving, so full of unaffected pity for the suffering and of love for the souls of all the erring—that it was that converted me. I was

converted by him although he had not tried to do it." An influence such as that, the emanation of the Spirit of Christ indwelling in the heart, is what every office-bearer who desires to serve efficiently should prayerfully covet.

IV

Fourthly, the office-bearer should be distinguished by certain characteristic traits.

Called to be a soldier and holding rank and commission in the great army of the Church, he should possess the soldier spirit and consequently show the distinctive qualities of the good soldier in all his service. Four soldierly traits should especially distinguish him :

1. A deep devotion to Christ, the great Captain of Salvation, should burn within him like a fire. He should love Christ passionately for all He has done for him in His Cross and Passion, and for what He is to him, and to all faithful soldiers, as Leader and Commander. His deepest desire should be to see Christ glorified in the advance of His Kingdom and the triumph of His cause. To hasten this consummation he should be ready to go anywhere, and any length with Christ. Christ's will for him should be absolute. In matters of choice he should seek the cue for his conduct in the question, " What is my Lord's will here ? " And when Christ indicates the proper course, he should instantly proceed upon it. Obedience should be the disciplined habit of his life.

" *His not to reason why,*
His but to do."

Indeed it should be always his delight to obey. And so it should be easy for him to set aside all selfish predilections, any desire he may have for pre-eminence, any habit of insisting upon his own way; rising above all irritability and pettiness, he should study to show himself approved in all things unto Christ, a soldier who has no other will but his Captain's, and therefore needs not to strive with others, nor to be annoyed at trifles, nor, as a consequence, to be ashamed.

Loyalty and love should be the outward marks of his devotion. An office-bearer should never be disloyal to his Captain, his Cause or his Comrades. He should be especially zealous and trustworthy when the way is hard or the fight is flagging. Remembering what his Captain bore, how utterly He gave himself to save mankind, he should shrink from no sacrifice. At all times the love of Christ should constrain him.

2. Imbued with the soldier spirit, he should take a serious view of his calling. For, alive as he must doubtless be to the momentous nature of the conflict which the Church is waging, he should neither underestimate the peril which threatens her, nor overlook the issues of life and death which are involved. Well aware that the Church is fighting for her very life against insidious and arrogant foes, which will undoubtedly gain dominion unless the Gospel wins its way and takes possession of men's hearts for Christ, and perceiving that while the warring forces are locked together in mortal combat, the souls of men are dying, and there is sorrow and suffering everywhere, he should be eager to press on with the Church's enterprise of evangelism,

giving himself without stint to every effort which seeks to save men's souls and hasten the Saviour's triumph.

In his eyes his office or task should be no sinecure, but a sphere for strenuous endeavour, in which any failure on his part in faithfulness or energy will weaken the Church's resistance to the attack of evil and leave dying souls to their fate.

3. Again, good soldier as he aspires to be, he should be possessed by the soldier's pride in "The Service." Not only should be he abundantly grateful that he has been counted worthy and given a task in Christ's Church and Kingdom, but he should be conscious of a glow in his heart whenever he thinks of the character and traditions of the Service to which he has been called. To serve Christ in His Church in seeking the redemption of men should be to him the greatest of honours, the most precious of privileges. Accordingly, his most ardent desire should be to prove himself worthy of the trust which has been reposed in him, and to enhance by his faithfulness the Service in which he is privileged to have a part. Of course, he will be well aware of the imperfections of the organised Church, and will spend much time in prayer concerning her, but he should never be heard to speak of her in any light, cynical or carping fashion likely to disparage her in the eyes of men.

For in his eyes, imperfect though she be, the Church must always be an Instrument divinely fashioned for the greatest of all tasks, an instrument which in spite of its faults has achieved great things in the past, and has within it the promise and potency of greater things still to come.

4. Finally, with his soldier's outlook, he should have no fear at all as to the final issue of the Church's warfare. No matter how difficult the enterprise may at any moment be, how dark the omens, how far away the longed-for hour of triumph, he should always be hopeful, fearless, and happy—aye, even in the darkest hour "happy as a lover." For surely his trust is in God, and God's Cause can never be defeated. Surely his hope is in Christ, a Captain who cannot fail. And since to faith has been given the promise of all things—even of victory over the world, his heart will surely tell him that the Church's triumph is bound to come, if those whom Christ has chosen to be His soldiers are faithful, and press on in His warfare with all the intrepidity of faith.

And so, possessing his soul in patience and hope, he should ever march forward as seeing, already here, the victory for which he strives, a cheerful encourager of others, who by the contagious energy which is bred of his own confidence is actually hastening the triumph in which he so ardently believes.

CHAPTER II

THE OFFICE-BEARER'S VIEW OF THE AGE

As one anxious to have the mind of Christ, the office-bearer should look out upon the age with seriousness and at the same time with hopefulness. Like his Master he should be ever conscious of the terrific opposition between the spirit of this world and the ideals, aims, and yearnings which the Spirit of God inspires in the hearts of men. His eye, open and sensitive, should perceive, in every sphere of the world's life as well as in the experience of every soul that breathes, the eternal conflict between matter and spirit, darkness and light, selfishness and love, which reached its grand climax in the experience of Jesus. Evil to him should be an entrenched, arrogant, insidious and ever threatening power, and sin the dark and baffling surd, defying elimination, which vitiates every work of man.

The philosophies of the Age, vaunting the sovereign virtues of Evolution, Civilisation and Education, should have no power to deceive him. For he should know only too well that the progress of the Age has but brought to our time new and more

intricate problems and a sterner challenge[1]: he should know indeed that, reinforced by all the powers of this Age of Progress, by its new knowledge, scientific developments and amazing activities, the material threatens as never before to dominate the spiritual, and hold it in thrall.[2] The Present should, without question, be to him an age of grave peril, enormous difficulty and clamant need, in which if the gathering onrush of materialism is not met by an adequate spiritual counter-stroke it will go hard with the cause of Christ in the world.[3]

But although he is thus alive to the seriousness of the modern situation, and may at times be caught up in the maze of stressful circumstance so as to be tempted to exclaim with Hamlet,

> "*The time is out of joint. O cursed spite*
> *That ever I was born to set it right,*"

he should never for a moment feel that there is

[1] "Here in New Zealand we have obtained all the things for which you are struggling. The social condition of the workers is as good as your wildest dreams. But the result is not what you seem to anticipate at home. The greater comfort and security of life, the high wages, the luxuries, the pleasures, have not resulted in a growth of religion, but quite the contrary. They have resulted in a sort of apathy and a spiritual dullness of which we are all complaining." In a letter from a friend to Rev. R. F. Horton, D.D., *Christian World Pulpit*, Vol. LXXX, page 19.

[2] "All these wonderful conquests of men in the physical world, the marvels of invention and the vast development of trade and industry, have been irresistible creators of materialistic conceptions of the world and the people that dwell therein." Kenneth Maclennan *The Cost of a New World*, page 155.

[3] "I believe that the accumulated experience of mankind and his wonderful discoveries are of great value. I only point out that they do not constitute real progress in human nature itself, and that in the absence of real progress these gains are external, precarious and liable to be turned to our own destruction, as new discoveries in chemistry may easily be."—Dean Inge. *The Idea of Progress, Outspoken Essays*, page 175.

cause for despondency. An inward light "that makes the path before him always bright," should cast its glow upon the far horizons. Omens should not be wanting to cheer his onward march. And a faith fortified by impregnable sanctions should inspire him with confidence and sustain his energy.

What are the grounds upon which his confidence should rest?

I

First and foremost, there is his faith in God.

The fundamental cause of lack of confidence, in respect of the outcome of the Church's warfare, lies in failure of faith. Men despond because they forget how great God is, and think of Him as less than He really is. A God, Infinite in Wisdom and Might, is bound to carry through everything He undertakes. That it should be otherwise is inconceivable.

The Creator of all things and Father of all men, who has so marvellously evolved a universe in which from stage to stage His creative purpose has pressed irresistibly onwards towards the far-off goal of a God-like Humanity, cannot do other than complete His work and bring the world process at long last to the very acme of perfection.

The Divine Son, who in His Passion and Cross revealed to men all the Father's Heart as He gave Himself in infinite love to wounds and death, that through His atoning Sacrifice the world might be redeemed from sin, cannot fail to draw all men to Himself and in the ultimate triumph of His Cross see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

And the Holy Spirit, who is at work in the hearts of men, leading them into all truth and sanctifying them unto holiness, and of whom our Lord testified "When He is come, He will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment," must of necessity accomplish what He is in the world to do.

This faith in the All-Sufficiency of God is the impregnable rock of man's confidence. Not only is it a coercive belief, one into which we are forced in our very efforts to think rationally of the universe, but it is backed by the strongest of sanctions. It is woven into the very texture of the Bible and meets us on every page. It was behind all the thinking of Jesus as His mind is interpreted to us in the Four Gospels and by the New Testament writers. And in all ages it has been the greatest of all dynamics, urging men on in their attempt to achieve the impossible, and keeping them undismayed and steadfast when times were dark and their cause was well-nigh lost. In it men have always been more than conquerors. Indeed it is the faith which will finally overcome the world.

Professing such a faith, the office-bearer of Christ's Church should be the most confident of men. Convinced that God will undoubtedly carry through all that He has undertaken, that it is impossible for Him to fail or be discouraged till He has set righteousness in the earth, he will never for a moment doubt the outcome of man's upward struggle. As a consequence he should be always hopeful, buoyant and energetic : his eyes should see amid the intricate movements and perplexing changes of the world, God marching on

His way : and in his soul should glow the rapture of coming victory.

II

Secondly, the office-bearer will find strong support for this confidence regarding the future in the many signs which he will find in the world around him of the working of God's Spirit, and in the quite evident movement of modern life onwards and upwards towards the consummation of the hopes which are his in Christ. Despite the fact that man's advance in the modern world in the mastery of the forces of nature and in material progress has been infinitely greater than his advance in the things of the Spirit and that, as a consequence, life to-day is full of changes and tendencies which are difficult to reconcile with progress Christwards, the cumulative effect of the many signs in the present age of the irresistible advance of Christ's Kingdom is most impressive and a powerful reinforcement of faith.

The office-bearer as he looks out upon the life of to-day should see progress everywhere.

Close at hand, in the environment in which he lives, he should be conscious of a process of Christian transformation by which in the course of the centuries manners have been softened, cruel customs eradicated, freedom won and extended, and life enriched with ample opportunity and immeasurable privilege. He has but to explore the England of Charles Dickens, with its chimney boys, its debtors' prisons, its transportations, its harsh officialdom and the awful condition of its poor; or stepping back a generation, recall the lurid factories, the barbarous

mines, the unspeakable prisons and all the horrors of the slave trade, which gave us Lord Shaftesbury, Elizabeth Fry, John Howard, and William Wilberforce; or peering into the tumultuous days of the Evangelical Revival, remember how on one occasion John Wesley spoke in Newgate to 47 poor wretches awaiting death, many of them merely for crimes of simple larceny; and comparing these "good old" but barbarous times with the gentler life of to-day, in which a Christian conscience speaks in every sphere and humanitarian and Christian ideals are the guiding stars of all sorts and conditions of men, he will not doubt in what direction the stream of tendency is flowing.

As he casts his eyes also upon the far horizons and seeks to estimate the progress of the Modern Missionary Movement he should have no difficulty in appreciating the persistent way in which the world is being evangelised, and the tremendous change which the Gospel is producing in the thought, customs and modes of life of non-Christian peoples.

He will note, for example, that since William Carey commenced work in India in 1793, progress has been so rapid that to-day there are 5,911 Protestant Missionaries at work, a Protestant Christian community of 2,307,387 (total Christian population about five millions) and strong indigenous churches exercising an incalculable influence upon the national life.

He will look into Africa, and perceive a missionary expansion, since Livingstone's day sixty years ago, so swift and extensive as to justify Sir Harry Johnston, one of the greatest living authorities on Africa, in saying "before long, so energetic

are the missionaries, the whole of Central Africa will have been Christianized, excepting along the east coast where the Arab influence is too strong to be uprooted."[1]

And he will rejoice that the two missionaries and two converts, the entire working force of evangelical Christianity in China at the time of Robert Morrison's death in 1834, have grown into 6,542 European and American agents and 344,974 communicants in a Protestant Christian community of 617,194 congregated in steadily growing and tested native churches which, in the stress and confusion inherent in the evolution of the China which is to be, are playing an influential and directive part.

It is true that the number of Christians in non-Christian lands is but a small proportion of the total number of inhabitants,[2] and that there are still vast fields unoccupied and many millions untouched by the Christian forces.[3] But, allowing for that fact, the achievement of the Christian Church up to the present, regarded as the first and preparatory stage of the Modern Missionary Movement, has never-

[1] Sir H. H. Johnston, *The Backward Peoples and our Relations with Them* (1920), page 29, quoted in *The Golden Stool*, Edwin W. Smith, page 41.

[2] The population of the World's Mission Fields according to the latest World Survey of the World Dominion Press published in *The Task of the Christian Church* (1926), page 139, is over 1,200 millions, viz., 1,237,226,711. The number of Protestant communicants in the World's Mission Fields is 3,487,542 in a Protestant Christian constituency of 8,043,355.

[3] "There are 333 counties in China with 166,500 towns and villages and a population of 38,508,305 without a single evangelistic centre or a single Christian." *The Task of the Christian Church*, page 8. "The Christian Community lives in 39,840 villages out of 498,527 of British India, that is, in one out of thirteen, and in 6,881 out of the 187,138 villages of the Indian States, or in one in twenty-seven." Alexander M'Leish, *The Evangelization of India*, World Dominion Press, page 5.

theless been truly remarkable. The ratio of increase of the world's Christian population is decidedly greater than the ratio of increase of the world's non-Christian population.[1] And, most significant of all, there is being produced, through the impact of the Gospel upon the intellectual, ethical, economic, religious and national life of Christian and non-Christian peoples alike, a continuous transformation, the character and extent of which cannot be indicated by mere figures nor indeed more than partially grasped by the average mind.

Two things should encourage the office-bearer as he studies the Church's world-wide enterprise of evangelism. He should be cheered by the advance which the Church has already made, and he should be spurred on to greater efforts as he beholds the marvellous way in which the Spirit of God is everywhere opening up the way and preparing for a greater advance in days to come.

Even a consideration of the factors which have combined to produce the problems and perils of the present age should tend to increase the office-bearer's confidence, for on examination many of these factors will be seen to be auxiliary, rather than detrimental, to the progress of the Kingdom and, therefore, capable of being utilised in the interests of the Kingdom. Take for example, the scientific development of the age, its mastery over Nature's forces, its

[1] Canon Robinson in his *History of Christian Missions* (page 118) points out that in the decade 1901-11 the population of India increased as a whole by 7.1 per cent. The Indian Christians (Protestant and Roman Catholic) increased during the same period from 2,664,313 to 3,574,770, i.e., by 34.2 per cent., or five times as fast as the whole population. He concludes from this (writing in 1915) that if the rate of increase since 1885 is maintained, the whole population of India will be Christian in about 160 years.

discoveries, inventions and stupendous organisation, which have inspired in man such a spirit of self-sufficiency and such a worship of material things. Granted that it is bringing forth harsh and bitter fruits in the evils of modern industrialism and in the general unrest and indifference of the times—things detrimental to the life of the Spirit and to the work and progress of the Church—yet the new powers, with which the modern scientific movement has endowed mankind, are aiding and accelerating the work of bringing in the Kingdom. Modern invention, discovery and organisation have raised the standard of living in every land and lifted all nations and peoples upwards in the scale of civilization. They have drawn the ends of the earth together and opened highways for the feet of those who preach the glad tidings. And they have put into the hands of the Christian Church illimitable resources and a marvellous equipment for carrying the Gospel of Love in practical forms to the service of the World in every sphere of need. Science in the Modern World is the handmaid of the Gospel.

Or take, as another example, the new knowledge which in every part of the world is disturbing the belief in old dogmas and creeds, and laying upon men the necessity of seeking truth afresh for themselves. Many good people are sorely perplexed at the intellectual tendencies of the age and imagine that Criticism and Science are essentially detrimental to faith and therefore the foes of the Gospel. But such good people need have no fear for faith. To-day men are passionate in their quest for truth. The modern mind demands truth above all things.

It refuses to be satisfied with anything less. That is why it is impatient of old forms of thought which satisfied bygone generations, but are now no longer vehicles of the truth they once expressed. The new knowledge has given the Church a truer understanding of the Bible as the Record of the Divine Revelation to men, and has bestowed on our generation such an insight into the wonderful works of God as tends to deepen rather than to destroy faith in devout minds.

Criticism and Science, so far from being inimical to the Christian Faith, are its allies. For, searching scrupulously for truth, each in its own sphere, when consecrated to the service of the Gospel, becomes the servant of that Spirit of Truth whom Christ sent into the world to lead men into all truth; and as such each is guiding the age into a truer understanding of the Mind of God as well as into a reasonable and devoted faith in Christ.

Recognising this, the office-bearer should thank God and take courage. It should be to him another of the many signs in the world of to-day of the working of God's Spirit, and should with these other signs help to convince him that, although upon the surface the noisy and obtrusive drift of things seems at times to be against the real line of progress, the deep, pervasive and silent currents are all moving strongly and carrying the Age with them onwards towards the City of God.

III

A third ground of confidence the office-bearer should find within himself. For knowing his own

heart, he will be convinced that men cannot live without God. The initial impulse of faith does not lie in intellectual argument, nor in the sweeping of emotion through the soul, but in vital need. "Men believe in God," says H. E. Fosdick in one of his books, "because they hunger for a world that is not chance and chaos, but that is guided by a Purpose. They believe in God, because in their struggles after righteousness they hunger for a Divine Ally in whom righteousness has its origin, its ground and destiny. They believe in God, because they hunger for confidence that Someone cares about our race in its conflicts and defeats, and because in their individual experience they want a friend."[1] Hunger is the most potent of all life's natural forces. It is the power which from the beginning of time has moved man hither and thither, the root-cause of his migrations, the most frequent motive of his wars, the dynamic urge behind his moral and intellectual advance. His hunger for God has made him incurably religious.

The world fails to satisfy the human spirit. God has made man for Himself and the human heart is restless till it finds rest in Him. And so all down the ages there have been recurring tides of the Spirit when, just because they were hungry, men have opened their hearts to God's incoming. The great religions, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism were borne in among men upon such tides. The progress of our faith has depended upon, and is marked by, such tides. The first expansion of Christianity in the Roman Empire, the Franciscan Movement in the 12th century, the Reformation,

[1] Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Meaning of Truth*, page 64.

the English Evangelical Revival and all lesser movements by which men have advanced in the things of the Spirit, have been periods of flood-tide.

And whenever, in the course of the Christian centuries men, absorbed in material things, have become self-sufficient and worldly, they have never succeeded, for any length of time, in repressing the elemental instincts and cravings of the human spirit. Sooner or later their spiritual hunger has reasserted itself, and then God has had His chance.

The office-bearer, knowing this, will be undismayed as he views the materialism and indifference of the present. For in his heart he will anticipate the inevitable reaction, when the tides of the spirit will once more come surging in. Indeed, as he explores the tendencies of the present, and notes particularly the Church's vigour, the world-wide expansion of the Kingdom and the ethical seriousness of the Age, it will be difficult for him to escape the conviction that revival on a major scale is close at hand.

IV

Lastly, the office-bearer should face the future confidently because, in a day of mighty issues, when the Church is being called upon to launch a great offensive, there lie to hand forces which, if adequately brought into action, will be irresistible. In the whole world there is nothing so potent as the Gospel of Redeeming Love, as a Christian Church filled with the power of the Spirit, and as the Christ-filled personality. On these three instruments of spiritual power—the media through which the Spirit of God

operates—the Saviour relies for the victory of His Cause. In a warfare into which forces of such weight are thrown, the issues cannot for a moment be in doubt. The present Age, it is true, is difficult and full of peril, but difficulty and danger surely add zest to the warfare of eager and confident men.

The call of to-day is by no means a forlorn hope, a summons to faltering forces with their backs to the wall to resist the terrifying onslaught of evil powers. It is a clarion note to all the faithful to rise up in the power of the Spirit and wrest a victory which consecrated men and women are well able to win. The present Age is indeed perilous. But to men and women of faith it is an Age of Hope. It is the Hour of the Church's opportunity.

"*Now God be thanked who hath matched us with this hour.*"

CHAPTER III

THE OFFICE-BEARER'S CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH

THE office-bearer's conception of the Church should be conformable to the Word of God; it should satisfy the modern mind; and it should be of such a nature as to inspire him with the utmost devotion, confidence, and energy in service.

In arriving at it he should be guided by the New Testament writers, the ancient Creeds of the Church and the words of Jesus.

The New Testament writers will supply him with the figures by which the Church was at the very beginning described. The ancient Creeds will point to the marks by which it has been distinguished in the thought of all the centuries. And the words of Jesus will help him to form a true idea of the purpose which it is in the world to serve.

The figures by which the Church was described by the New Testament writers and chiefly by St. Paul, are, by their multiplicity, eloquent of the passionate desire in those early days to reach an adequate conception of the Church, and, by their rich variety, they point to the Church's many-sided nature and function.

In the writings of the great Apostle the Church is sometimes spoken of as the household of faith[1]—

[1] Eph. ii, 19. Gal. vi, 10.

the family in heaven and earth of those who have been made the sons of God. At other times it is described as the temple of God,[1] the very seat and shrine of the Eternal. Again it is set forth as the body of Christ,[2] the organism in which Christ's spirit operates, the instrument by which the soul of Christ works. Still again it is portrayed as a woman in all her radiant beauty, the bride of the world's Redeemer.[3] And finally it is held up before men as the medium of revelation, the pillar and ground of the truth,[4] holding aloft in the eyes of the nations the mystery of godliness, the organ through which the Almighty speaks both to men and to angels.[5]

The three marks which the Ancient Creeds ascribe to the Church are Unity, Purity and Catholicity. The Apostles' Creed describes the Church as *The Holy Catholic Church;* the Nicene Creed as *The One Holy Catholic* (*and Apostolic*) *Church.* For, although rent by so many divisions, it is *one* by virtue of its common faith in the one Lord, the common hope which animates it and the one upholding and directing Spirit by whom it is inspired. There is but "one flock," "one Shepherd." All sects, denominations and separate Churches are but parts of the one Church of Jesus Christ.

Further, in spite of so much, in its members individually and in its corporate life as an organisation that is human, frail and sinful, it is *holy* in respect of the Holy One who is its head, the "holy seed" which is in the midst of it, its holy calling

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 16. Eph. ii. 21, also 1 Peter ii. 5.
[2] Eph. i. 21. Col. i. 18-24.
[3] 2 Cor. xi. 2. Eph. v. 32, also Rev. xix. 7, xxi. 2-19, xxii. 17.
[4] 1 Tim. iii. 15.
[5] Eph. iii. 10.

or vocation, and the prospect it has of one day being "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." The body in which the Holy Spirit dwells, which influences men in holy ways through its teaching, prayers and institutions, may justly be called holy.

And again, notwithstanding the exclusiveness and intolerance which are so liable to be displayed in separate churches, the Church is *catholic* or *universal*, since its ministry and sacraments are for everyone, and since all can find a place within its fold, and, one day, will find a place. There is only one thing which restricts the enjoyment of the Church's privileges everywhere and by everybody, and that is lack of faith in Christ. All who anywhere acknowledge "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," under whatever form of Church polity they may live, worship and serve, are members in, and have a right to all the privileges of, the Church of Jesus Christ.

These three "Notes" (or test marks) constitute a three-fold ideal towards the realization of which the Spirit of God is ever urging the Church Visible.

The words of Jesus which will help the office-bearer to form a true idea of the purpose for which the Church exists, are the two groups of sayings in which He spoke, first of the shepherd, the sheep and the fold—and, second of the salt, the light and the leaven.

In the former of these groups He clearly indicated that His Church was designed for His people's safety, nurture, guidance and growth; and in the latter that His followers, both in their individual and corporate capacity, were to redeem the world from corruption, illumine the world's mind and transform

and sanctify every phase of the world's complex life.

For many centuries a conception of the Church held sway which did less than justice to these sayings of Jesus. It thought of salvation as mere escape from a wicked world and of the Church as an ark sailing across the waves of this troublous life and bearing saved sinners into the haven of eternal felicity. Setting the Church over against the world, it thought of its function as exclusively the preparation of souls for the world to come, and completely overlooked the part which it was designed, according to Jesus, to play in the redemption of the world which now is.

The modern mind, in its reaction from such a mediæval theory, has laid hold again of the full-orbed conception which was in the mind of Jesus, and regards the Church as created for the sake both of man's spiritual life and of the world's redemption. The office-bearer should glory in this conception. He should think of the Christian as drawn, not out of the world, but away from the world's evil, so that, saved and sanctified within the spiritual environment which the Church provides, he may be equipped to play his part in redeeming his fellows, in transforming human institutions, in humanising and Christianising the whole life of mankind and in hastening the coming of that new world which the prophets saw afar off, and for which the Saviour laid down His life.

To him the Church should be a fold in which he finds shelter, rest, spiritual nourishment, guidance, companionship; a temple wherein by divinely given means he learns to walk with God ; a training

ground on which he develops those gifts of the Spirit which are needed for service in this world and for life in the world to come. At the same time he should regard the Church as the means of world redemption, the instrument of true human progress, the organ in and through which must function those vital processes upon which the health, enlightenment, growth and final perfecting of the world depend.

In this latter aspect the Church should appear to him to be the true soul of the world, " helping it," as a modern scholar aptly puts it, " to realise itself in opposition to its baser instincts and lower nature."[1]

With such a conception of the Church's function he will never for a moment think of the Church as anything else than a divine institution. Despite the many defects inherent in its composition and in its service in the mundane sphere, it will ever be in his eyes " a body heavenly in its calling, spiritual in its nature, and deriving all its permanence, authority, and vitality from union with Christ as its living Head, and thus the depository of all those manifold gifts and powers with which He had endowed it."[2]

[1] H. D. A. Major, *Modern Problems of the Church*, page 17. Principal Major, whose argument has been largely drawn upon in this passage, points out that this was the conviction of the *Ad Diognetum* which Bishop Lightfoot described as " one of the noblest and most impressive of early Christian apologies." He quotes its unknown author thus :

" In a word, what the soul is in a body, this the Christians are in the world. The soul is spread through all the members of the body, and Christians through all the divers cities of the world. The soul hath its abode in the body, and yet is not of the body. . . . The soul which is invisible is guarded in the body which is visible ; so Christians are recognised as being in the world, and yet their religion remaineth invisible."

[2] Norman Macleod, *Church, Ministry and Sacraments*, page 8.

II

No figure in all the New Testament will bring this modern view of the Church so vividly and powerfully home to the office-bearer as the Pauline metaphor, the Church, "the body of Christ."

A body is the vehicle of a spirit, and, as Christ's body, Christian men and women, individually and in their corporate fellowship, provide the living Lord with a vehicle or medium in and through which to express Himself in the present day, and to continue and bring to completion the task for which "in the fulness of time" He came into the world. As the body of Christ the Church pursues the same ends as the Saviour pursued when He was here among men. Its task is to reveal the Father, redeem the lost, build up the Kingdom, and reconcile the world to God. As the Good Shepherd, it feeds the sheep and cares for the lambs of the flock. As the Divine Teacher, it takes the whole of life as its province and relates everything to the love of God. As the Helper of the helpless, it stoops down to the bruised, the maimed, the halt and the blind, and ministers to them in love. As the Champion of the weak, it defends the right and strikes militant blows against wrong. And, as the Bearer of the Cross, it dies daily for the sins of men. And all this it does, following His example, by the witness of holy and faithful living, the ministry of service, and the sacrificial giving of self.

Such a sublime view of the Church's task must inevitably abase and chasten us. It brings home to us our individual and corporate shortcomings,

revealing how far Christians and the Church fall short of the achievement of their own ideals. Yet within the Church's fellowship there are always those who live the life, faithful souls who follow the Master in sincerity, pouring themselves out for the sake of others and braving even the shame and agony of the Cross. These fill up what is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church, and in so doing reveal the love of God to men, redeem their sinful fellows, make righteousness and peace to appear and bring the world with all its sins and sorrows ever nearer unto God. They show what the Church is in its ideal self, and how possible it is to make it more truly the body of Christ.

On examination, the task to which our Lord devoted Himself in the ministry which He exercised among men reveals the modes in which the Church functions in the interests of the Kingdom.

(1) He devoted Himself to the nurture of spiritual life in the souls of those who believed in Him. Throwing around them a spiritual atmosphere, He drew them by the spell of His own devotion into the presence of God and constrained them to bow down and worship; and as they worshipped He taught them to know the Father, to commune with Him in childlike prayer, to open to Him the deepest desires of their hearts, and to lay hold of Him in trustful faith. He inspired in them spiritual resolves which made their worship fruitful by deepening their devotion, by transforming their characters and by provoking them to love and good works. So doing He built them up in the faith, filled them with His own com-

passionate spirit, and then led them out to the redemptive service of their fellows.

So does the Church first and foremost give itself to the fostering of spiritual life. It calls its members to worship; it provides them with the means of grace; it gives them spiritual and ethical instruction; it encourages and comforts them with its fellowship; it guides them in the chastening and sanctifying experiences of the life of prayer; it makes them childlike; it develops in them the Christlike character and it launches them, equipped with a Saviour-like spirit and motives, upon tasks of redemptive love. Providing the atmosphere, environment and all the heavenly graces requisite for the growth, practice and service of the Christian life, it watches over the souls of those who believe; it nurtures, educates and equips them. The Church is their Mother and they are a family of worshipping children.

(2) Our Lord sought to bring men and women within the circle of believers. It was for this purpose primarily that He came from God. Men did not know the Father. They were in bondage to their sins. They had no clear light to guide them to the supreme good in life. And they had no certainty about the life to come. Consequently life did not contain for them the elements that were calculated to make it rich, full and satisfying. It was full of dark perils and hopeless sorrows. And many were without joy because of their own wickedness, or because their lot was hard. What men needed was a *Saviour*—one to deliver them from life's futility, and to give them what they so sorely lacked. And so He came preaching the good

news of the Kingdom, saying to all sorts and conditions of men, "I am come to show you the Father, to save you from your sins, to cast the guiding light upon your path, to fill your souls with immortal hope;" and men, responding at once, became possessed of more abundant life and were added to the number of those who believed. Our Lord sought to win men to God with the utmost passion. In His eyes, away from God men were lost. And so without ceasing, without counting the cost He sought to save them and bring them back to God, because He loved them so, and because their need so moved Him to compassion. "The Son of Man is come," He declared, "to seek and to save that which was lost."

This reveals the Church's evangelical function. In so far as it possesses the Spirit of Christ, it reaches out to those outside its fellowship and seeks to bring them in. Its evangelical energy is directed to the quickening of spiritual life in order that, by the new birth, those outside the Kingdom may become possessed of the abundant life of the Kingdom. Accordingly, it preaches the Gospel to all who will hear it, and sets in motion a multiple variety of agencies and organisations to awaken spiritual life in the young, to bring to decision the undecided, to rouse the indifferent, to disarm the hostile, to deliver the doubtful, the hopeless, the habit-bound, to reclaim the wanderers and to save the lost. The work of evangelism is the most fundamental of its functions. It was created, as Christ the Divine Son was sent, to bring to men the good news of Salvation and to gather them to the heart and into the Home of God.

(3) Our Lord came to redeem the ordinary life of the world, to spiritualise its conditions and activities. His aim was twofold: first to give men right principles and motives and inspire them to right action, and second to make life good, to bring its every condition and activity into accordance with the righteous will of God. To do this, He relied wholly upon the power of persuasion. Some things He consistently declined to do. He refused to solve public and social questions by political action. He held Himself conspicuously aloof from everything that savoured of political agitation. He confined Himself to a line of action in which political partisanship had no part. When need presented itself which His philanthropy could meet, He gave Himself to its succour. When His soul was vexed by evils which bore cruelly upon the weak and helpless, He fearlessly spoke out against them. But never once did He substitute political action for the patient enunciation of principles. He restricted Himself to instruction. He proclaimed truths which, as they have been applied by His followers in their capacity of citizens of the world, have acted like leaven and sometimes even like dynamite, eliminating from human life some of its most deeply-rooted evils.

So does His Church, in face of the world's anomalies, and problems and needs, refrain from direct political action. It is not its province to become a political partisan. It gives the helping hand to the weak. It speaks out against flagrant evils which impede and destroy life. It bends its energies to inspire in men a truly Christian Conscience—one which refuses to tolerate wrong any-

where. But in so far as effective action is concerned, it confines itself to persuasion, giving its members principles which it leaves them free to apply, relying upon the progressive enlightenment of conscience, individual and corporate, to achieve the realisation of the Christian ideal. Like the Master, the Church declines to be entangled with the affairs of this life, in order that, unimpeded, it may preach to men the Gospel of God's redeeming love—that Gospel which on its social side demands the application of principles adequate ultimately to transform the world and make all things new.

(4) Jesus aimed at bringing the whole world into subjection to Himself. Because He was a single personality and could be only in one place at a time, His evangelistic efforts were restricted to His own land. But the thought of the great wide world was ever in His mind. He spoke of His other sheep, of all nations gathered before the judgment throne, of His gospel preached to all peoples. And if His disciples have interpreted aright His glowing thought, it is quite evident from their writings that He envisaged the complete fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, which pictured the earth as filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and that He anticipated the time when all nations would be gathered under His righteous rule and He would have dominion from sea to sea.

That vision the Church keeps ever before its eyes, as it presses on with its mighty task of world-wide evangelism. As the Body of Christ it seeks the salvation of every creature, the extension of the Church into every land, the triumph of the Kingdom

among all nations, so that, redeemed, transformed and truly Christian, the earth may be filled with the glory of the Lord and the triumph of Christ and His Church may be complete.

III

This sublime view of the Church's nature and functions should enable the office-bearer, in face of its own shortcomings and the difficulty of its task in the modern world, to think rightly and with confidence of the Church; and at the same time it should fill him with a due sense of responsibility, as he realises himself to be a member of the body through which Christ is seeking to continue and complete His redemptive task.

Had the Church been merely human in origin and constitution—a voluntary association devised by the wisdom and piety of its members for their own mutual benefit and the realisation of Christian ideals in the world—the contention so often heard to-day that the Church, effete and futile, is wholly inadequate for the task which it has undertaken would be quite legitimate, and difficult, if not impossible, to refute.

But, supernatural in origin and maintenance, the body through which Christ would redeem mankind, it cannot but succeed in its task if its members will only yield themselves to Him who is its head that He may make of it what He will. The Church is the world's only hope, but with Christ in the midst of it, it is not a forlorn hope. It is a redemptive instrument which cannot fail.

This throws upon the members of the Church

a tremendous responsibility. For what is the Church? What is the body of Christ? It is the aggregate of those who have been redeemed and called, and who to all outward appearance are but ordinary men and women. It is upon the ordinary man that Christ relies for the accomplishment of His redemptive task. He asks him to give His Spirit a body—hands that He may work, feet that He may travel, a mouth that He may speak, eyes to flash with His love, a heart to overflow to all mankind with His purity and grace.

A member of Christ's body must be spiritual. One in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells, one through whom the Spirit of Christ works. Such a member the office-bearer should ever seek to be. In view of what the Church is—the body of Christ—and in view of the function assigned to him as a member of Christ's body, the thought should ever be in his mind: "What manner of person ought I not to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, and in the zeal of eager service, since I have been called to play such a part as this in the redemptive purposes of God!"

CHAPTER IV

THE OFFICE-BEARER'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIS OWN CHURCH

WHILE the office-bearer as a Christian man lives in fellowship with the Church Catholic, and plays his part in furthering the ends which the whole Church is pursuing, it is in his own Communion that he primarily and most effectively realises his fellowship with the Church of Jesus Christ, and finds the channels through which to make his contribution to the Church as a whole. His own Communion, with its history, traditions, principles, worship, administration and enterprises forms the environment in which his spiritual life is developed and from which he derives the inspirations which colour his outlook and nourish his spirit; it constitutes the militant arm in which his personal service is enlisted and by which it is projected to the farthest outposts of the Church's service.

Denominational pride and loyalty, and a desire to promote denominational interests should accordingly be one of his most clearly marked characteristics. He should be proud of his Church's past, its distinctive principles, the warmth of its devotional life and the manifold enterprises for which it is renowned. Impelled by deep feelings of love to, and loyalty for his Church, he should be at

pains to equip himself to serve it, and to promote its interests in every possible way. This means that a knowledge of his own denomination should form a necessary part of the efficient office-bearer's equipment. He must know all he can about the communion to which he belongs in order that the service which he renders may be intelligent as well as effective, and that his pride in, and love for his Church may be deep and strong.

Such a knowledge, of course, need not be exhaustive, but it should be comprehensive. He should know his Church's history, the principles to which it testifies, the manner in which it is governed and administered, and what the chief tasks are to which it is bending its energies.

I

It should be the office-bearer's first endeavour to increase his knowledge of his Church's heritage and distinctive testimony.

Why should he wear a label of which he does not know the meaning? Why serve himself heir to a legacy which he can neither appreciate nor adequately appropriate? If he is to be an intelligent member of the communion into which he has been born or to which at present he is attached, he must know what his Church has brought to him out of the past and what it stands for, in common with all other churches in the world of to-day, as well as in distinction from them. He must be at no small pains to make his own that rich legacy of faith, principle, ideal and purpose which constitutes his Church's heritage, and diligently seek to appreciate

the doctrines and principles which are the distinctive testimony of his Church so fully that they will become woven into the texture of his own personal faith.

With this end in view he should feed his imagination upon the romance and glamour surrounding his Church's historical origins and founders, and strive to catch the flame of its idealisms and the inspiration of those heroisms which its testimony has called forth in faithful confessors at critical periods of its history. He should seek to interpret in the light of present-day thought and needs the faith once delivered to his fathers; and, because past generations have time and again witnessed to it at the cost of suffering and sacrifice, he should strive to make that faith his own. Moreover, he should regard as a sacred trust the evangelical enterprises at home and abroad handed down by his forebears; and since they are the characteristic enterprises of his Church, he should put forth all his energy to maintain and develop them.

In the knowledge he thus acquires of his Church's heritage and testimony, as well as in the ordinary worship and service which he renders, the office-bearer will become aware of two influences which play an indefinable and yet a decisive part in moulding his ideals and colouring his outlook.

He will appreciate what is called his Church's "ethos," the peculiar tone or genius of his denomination, the spirit or atmosphere pervading its devotion and service; and he will discover the distinctive elements of truth and grace in its creed, ritual and polity which his Church contributes to the life and experience of the Church as a whole. It is this

ethos and these elements more than anything else which make him what he is, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Congregationalist, or Baptist. They are something distinctively denominational, yet they belong to and enrich the whole Church and should all find a place in the co-ordinated and perfected Church of the future. For no Church, however imposing its form, venerable its descent or scriptural its constitution, adequately expresses or realises the full content and promise of Christian faith and life. Each is but " a several building . . . growing into a holy temple in the Lord," contributing to that spiritual edifice, by the emphasis which it puts upon this or that element of faith and order, something whose permanent value will appear " when we all attain unto the unity of the faith."

It is clear therefore that each denomination has its own peculiar gift to offer for the enrichment of the whole Church.

Episcopacy, more akin to the older Catholicism than any other Protestant Communion, and in some respects a link between the Roman and Eastern Orthodox Churches on the one hand, and the Reformed Churches on the other, contributes ancient elements which it has made peculiarly its own, the ancient creeds, the ancient liturgy, the ancient orders, the Apostolic Succession (the fact of it apart from any particular theory) ; and at the same time joins with all the Reformed Churches in standing for a personal relationship with God as the core and kernel of religion, the Bible as the rule of faith, the right of private judgment within reasonable limits, and freedom for Christian thought and inquiry. More than any of the Reformed Communions,

Episcopacy prizes the objective side of worship. The centre of its churches is the altar, not the pulpit.

Presbyterianism comes with its simple worship, its evangelical creed, the representative form of its government and especially those distinctive features of its polity which have made it strong—the office of the Eldership, the gradation of its ecclesiastical courts and the parity of its presbyters (i.e., the equal footing of its ministers and elders in the councils and administration of the Church), its cherishing love of liberty, its esteem for education and a thoroughly trained ministry, and the emphasis which it has always placed upon the eternal value of "principle."

Wesleyanism contributes its "assured" faith and its evangelical fervour, the family spirit of its churches, the intimate fellowship of the class meeting and the proved effectiveness of a lay, as well as a clerical ministry.

The Congregationalists and the Baptists, endeavouring to carry to its logical issue the liberty of the Christian people, as based upon the inalienable right of the priesthood of believers, add as their quota their insistence upon the essential freedom of the local congregation in virtue of the Presence of Christ, and the operation of His Spirit in the midst of it, constituting it a true Church—which freedom they regard as inalienable, and, only for the sake of fuller life and wider service, to be modified through association with other churches (congregations).

And, finally, the Quakers bring the doctrine of the "Inner Light" which yields to the Spirit of Christ within the heart the control of worship, thought, conduct and service.

The office-bearer should be quick to detect the elements of permanent value with which his own denomination enriches the Church as a whole, and he should cherish them in his heart. But in so doing he must not become proud, exclusive, arrogant or intolerant, as if his denomination were the only true Church. Such a spirit is detrimental to unity. Remembering rather that his denomination has been entrusted with some portion only of the King's treasures, he should find his delight alike in sharing his own riches with others and in participating in theirs. By so doing, he will enrich his own soul and help to develop that large and generous spirit of catholicity which must be the common possession of all the churches, if unity is ever to be realised.

II

A working knowledge of the polity and of the administrative machinery and methods of his own denomination should be included in the equipment of the office-bearer.

In the matter of polity and administration churches follow three classical types, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian and the Congregational. But whether the office-bearer belongs to a Church in which the prime authority is vested in a bishop, or to one in which it lies in a court of presbyters, or to one in which it is retained by the members of the Christian Congregation, he will find in his denomination a more or less complicated system of machinery, consisting of deliberative courts, councils, conferences or assemblies, and administrative

departments, through which his denomination expresses its mind and brings its energies to bear upon the interests, tasks and problems which belong to it as an organised Church.

With this machinery the office-bearer should make himself acquainted in order that he may intelligently follow his Church's procedure when she acts judicially, legislatively, and administratively.

The Episcopalian Lay Representative should be familiar with the Orders of Ministers—Bishops, Priests and Deacons, and know that these are graded in the Province, the Diocese, the Cathedral Chapter and the Parish according to appointment and preferment, into Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans, Canons and Prebendaries, Rural Deans, Rectors and Vicars, Assistant Curates. From their number are formed the ecclesiastical councils [in England, Convocation—the House of Bishops and the House of Clergy; the Diocesan Synod; the Cathedral and Ruri-Decanal Chapters: in Scotland, the Episcopal Synod (Bishops); the Provincial Synod (Bishops and Representative Clergy); the Diocesan Synod], which advise and guide in the exercise of Episcopal rule. He should acquaint himself with the machinery which has been created to assist church legislation and in which the laity have been given a consultative voice (in England, the National Assembly with its House of Bishops, its House of Clergy and its House of Laity: in Scotland, the Consultative Council on Church Legislation). He should have also a sound knowledge of the working of the various councils in which clergy and lay representatives co-operate in discussing church work and financial matters (in

England, the National Assembly, the Diocesan Conference, the Ruri-Decanal Conference, the Parish Council and the Vestry; in Scotland, the Representative Church Council, the Diocesan Council, the Vestry and the Central Funds Committee).

The Presbyterian office-bearer should begin with a clear conception of his own status. According to the Scottish "Second Book of Discipline" (1581) whether he be elder or deacon (manager or trustee) he is equally with the minister "a minister of the kirk." In the Presbyterian system the power of rule lies with the presbyters. All presbyters are equal in status,[1] the teaching presbyters or ministers being entrusted with the preaching of the Word, the conduct of public worship, the administration of the Sacraments and the spiritual oversight of the flock; the ruling presbyters or elders assisting the ministers in the exercise of discipline, pastoral oversight, the administration of the Lord's Supper and the general work of the congregation. The deacons, managers or trustees are auxiliary office-bearers having charge of the temporal affairs of the congregations, and they sit in a court or committee of their own, but, unless they are elders, they do not participate in the work of the Church's spiritual courts.

[1] "In counsel and in the government of the Church the minister and the lay-elder have the same authority; their votes count as equal in Presbytery and Assembly; and they are sometimes spoken of as belonging to the same order, only with a difference of function. But the difference of function involves a difference of ordination. A minister is ordained to his office by a Presbytery—that is, by a group or college of not fewer than three ordained ministers; elders are ordained by a minister only. The minister alone is ordained for the ministration of the Word and Sacraments." Rev. D. C. Macgregor, D.D., *What the Churches Stand for*, VII, Presbyterianism, page 107.

These spiritual courts, graded in authority, are, along with the office of the eldership and the parity of presbyters, the most characteristic feature of Presbyterianism. They form an inverted pyramid, the apex of which is the Session, composed of ministers and elders chosen by the members of the congregation, exercising power in a single congregation; above that is the Presbytery, made up of ministers and representative elders from the participating Sessions, having jurisdiction over a group of congregations: above that again, the Provincial Synod, embracing all the members of the presbyteries within its bounds, with jurisdiction over a whole province. And supreme above all, the General Assembly which, in the Church of Scotland, e.g., is made up of clerical and lay commissioners in equal numbers, comprising one-fourth of the ministers and elders of the presbyteries, and exercising jurisdiction over the whole Church.

Each of these courts exercises rule in its own sphere: from each there is an appeal to the court above: and each, in the ascending scale, exercises jurisdiction over the courts below. With these courts, their functions, powers and working the elder or deacon should make himself acquainted, in order that Presbyterianism may be to him (to alter slightly Principal Rainy's words) " a system in which everyone has his recognised place, his defined position, his ascertained and guarded privileges, and feels himself a part of a great unity, with a right to care for its welfare and to guard its integrity."[1]

Believing in the autonomy of the congregation as an independent church, the Congregationalist or

[1] *Three Lectures on the Church of Scotland*, p. 36.

Baptist deacon should regard the machinery of his denomination as designed simply to promote fellowship and the common interests which belong to the wider life of his communion. The unions or councils, in which fellowship is realised and common interests are furthered, do not in Congregational churches assist in or exercise jurisdiction in either the episcopal or presbyterian sense. Yet they modify the absolute autonomy of the local church, and at the same time enrich its outlook and increase its power and range of service. And so they play an essential part in enabling the independent church to share in the unity and enterprise of a great denomination.

The office-bearer of a free Church should therefore be familiar with a great deal more than merely the constitution and working of his own self-governing congregation. He must be conversant with the Church Meeting and its powers of rule, and with the function of the Deacon and the Deacons' Meeting in assisting the minister in his duties and in advising the congregation in difficult matters of discipline, administration, etc., which come up for decision. He should acquaint himself with the various ways in which his own and other independent Churches are affiliated for mutual support, for the cultivation of brotherhood and for the exercise of a wider and more effective ministry. If he is an English Congregationalist, e.g., he should inquire into the working of the local Board or Council of his Church, if there be any, and also into the functions of the County Union, and of the Congregational Union of England and Wales which represents as a denomination the fellowship of the

Congregational Churches throughout the whole country. In this way he should learn how, in a district, a group of churches may co-operate in the oversight and extension of the work in a particularly difficult centre; how, in the wider area of the county, churches can associate and assist one another in meeting local needs, in deepening their own spiritual life and in advancing the work of the denomination at home and abroad; and how, in and through the Congregational Union, with its Council of 300 representatives elected annually by the County Unions and meeting at least twice a year, with its General Assembly—the Annual Meeting of the Union, a representative body of all the Churches, also meeting twice a year, with a membership which includes the members of the Council with ministers and representatives of all the Churches connected with the County Unions—and with its administrative departments and committees, the multifarious activities of a great denomination, engaged in momentous undertakings for the Kingdom of God, are carried on.

All Congregational churches follow more or less closely this model and the office-bearer—Congregationalist or Baptist—should inform himself as to the way in which it is worked out in his own denomination.

The Methodist form of church government in Britain, by reason of its graded and authoritative associations or courts, is somewhat akin to the Presbyterian; in America, with its bishops, it is akin to the Episcopalian form. Its distinguishing features are its lay officers, comprising the leaders of its classes, the local preachers who assist its ministers,

and the stewards who manage its finances; its circuits or groups of societies or congregations in charge of a superintendent and, usually, one or more subordinate ministers; the itinerant character of its ministry—appointments to circuits being usually for three years; and its governing associations or courts culminating in Conference, which is supreme and unifies the system.

Methodism is pragmatic and connexional. It bases the legitimacy of its polity not only on New Testament sanction but also on its fitness to meet present needs. It is a society of "people called Methodists" associated or connected together for fellowship and service. The "Connexion" is governed and administered through a graded system of associations or courts. The class leaders and representatives of each society, with the Superintendent or a subordinate minister, form the Leaders' Meeting, which has spiritual oversight of the society, group or congregation and, together with the stewards and trustees, manages its affairs. The ministers, stewards, class leaders, lay preachers and society representatives of the circuit or group of societies or congregations meet in "Quarterly Meeting" and control all the societies within the circuit. A larger association is the District Synod, meeting in May, in which the ministers of the circuits included gather in Pastoral Session for the discharge of certain spiritual functions, such as the examination of candidates for the ministry, cases of ministerial discipline, etc., and ministers and representatives of the circuits meet in Representative Session for legitimate district business, and deliberate and vote on an equal footing. There is

also a Meeting of Synod in September, when financial affairs are considered and committees appointed.

The supreme council is the Annual Conference, meeting in July, which is composed of 300 ministers and 300 lay-representatives, chosen partly by the Conference itself and partly by the District Synods. Like the District Synods, Conference assembles in two sessions. The Pastoral Session includes the Legal Hundred required by John Wesley's Deed of Declaration. It deals with questions of doctrine, discipline, and the stationing of ministers, exercises a strict discipline over the ministers of the Connexion and also considers all appeals in cases of discipline affecting members. The Representative Session discusses all questions in which the expenditure of money is involved, and reviews the work done by the several Church Departments during the year. Its resolutions are made valid by the confirming vote of the "Legal Conference." Conference ordains to the ministry, appoints ministers to circuits, and reviews the proceedings of the inferior associations or courts.

With all this in its detailed working the leader or steward should be familiar.

III

The office-bearer should also be familiar with the various enterprises which his Church as a denomination is undertaking at home and abroad. In all churches, denominational activities are directed by special departments, each under the supervision of its own committee. These departments deal

with the maintenance of the ministry; the training of the clergy; the education of youth; home evangelism; the propagation of the gospel abroad; temperance and social service; social and public questions.

With the detailed working of these departments in his own denomination, the office-bearer, in so far as he is able, should acquaint himself. He should learn, e.g., the methods by which his denomination maintains the ministry; the work of its colleges; the aims and organisation of its Youth work; its enterprises in Home Evangelism; the fields abroad in which it is interested or operates—their situation, and the progress, needs and prospects of the work; its rescue and social work; the way in which it expresses its mind on social and industrial questions. He should inquire into the policy which his denomination pursues in each department of its work, and seek to discover the principles which should govern any Church's activities in any given direction.

These principles are not difficult to perceive, if the Church's work is considered from the point of view of the Church itself. The following are a few of them :

Whatever methods of stipend provision prevail in a denomination, gospel ordinances ought to be maintained and extended on the principle that the strong ought to help the weak in a systematic and brotherly manner. The maintenance of the ministry ought to mean the upkeep of the ministry as a whole and not simply the provision of a congregational pastor. It is the privilege as well as the duty of Christian people to help in providing a ministry for the whole Church.

The educational programme for the youth of the Church most likely to give the best results in the awakening of spiritual life and the upbuilding of Christian character must be graded, progressive and continuous; it must aim not only at imparting Biblical knowledge and spiritual truth, but must seek also to familiarise the youthful mind with the Christian Enterprise in all its bearings both at home and abroad.

In home evangelism, while aiming at spiritual results in heart and life, the Church's constant endeavour should be to give the outsider *itself*. In much present-day evangelism the Church gives to those outside its fellowship less than itself, with meagre results in spiritual decision and character-building. It is not enough, in the task of evangelisation simply to hold a mission or plant a mission hall in a certain district. To offer Christ and all His benefits to the indifferent, the Church must gather the churchless into fully equipped and actively functioning congregations. The congregation with its fellowship and Christian activities is the unit for home evangelism.

The Church in the field abroad is reproducing itself in indigenous Native Churches, which are exercising a Christianising influence upon social and national development and beginning to undertake the evangelisation of their own and neighbouring peoples. Such indigenous Churches still require missionary guidance but the responsibility of the Home Churches in aiding their development is steadily diminishing. This is freeing the missionary forces to attack the task of reaching the vast and yet untouched millions—which is the primary

missionary duty. In view, therefore, of the relatively small portion of the field yet covered by the Christian Church, the Home Churches and Missionary Societies must press on with unabated vigour in their evangelistic and pioneering programmes.

In dealing with social problems and public questions, the Church must not in any way compete with political parties or let itself become involved in the political machine. Its task is fundamental. It is, by the ordinary preaching of the Word, by the ex cathedra utterances of the expert whose wide knowledge, keen insight and consecrated personality give him a prophet-like prestige, by the voice of its councils and courts, and by the use of literature and the press, to illumine and stimulate the conscience, so that a Christian public opinion may be created and the Christian citizen may be helped to carry to a successful issue, in the arena of civic and national life, the principles and ideals of his Lord and Master.

Supplementary Notes on the Order, Practice and Procedure of the Churches

These Notes have been compiled chiefly from the following sources:—

A Brief Sketch of the Church of England, by the Rt. Rev. G. K. A. Bell, D.D. Bishop of Chichester.
The Official Year Book of the Church of England.
The Official Handbook of the Church in Wales.
The Irish Church Directory.
The Year Book of the Episcopal Church in Scotland.
Presbyterianism, by Rev. J. Macpherson M.A.
Digest of Laws and Decisions relating to the Church of Scotland, by the Very Rev. William Mair, D.D.

Practice and Procedure in the United Free Church of Scotland, 1905.
The Work and Administration of a Congregational Church by T. T. James.
The Congregational Year Book.
The Year-Book of the Congregational Union of Scotland.
The Baptist Handbook.
The Summary of Methodist Law and Discipline.
Minutes of Conference, 1930.

The Anglican Orders.

The Archbishop, the supreme head of a province of the Church, presides and exercises authority over all the bishops in the province. In England, the Archbishop of Canterbury, with precedence over the Archbishop of York, is the representative head of the Anglican Communion. In Ireland the Archbishop of Armagh as Primate of all Ireland takes precedence over the Archbishop of Dublin. In Scotland there is neither Primate nor Archbishop, but a Primus, elected by the Bishops, presides over the College of Bishops and acts as the representative head of the Episcopal Church in Scotland.

The Bishop is the head of the Diocese, the Chief Pastor from whom all the other clergy derive their authority in the Diocese. In England in populous centres he may delegate his authority to Suffragan or Assistant Bishops, who hold jurisdiction within and over part of the Diocese.

The Dean is the head of the Cathedral Church, in which is placed the Bishop's cathedra or seat. He forms with the *Prebendaries* or *Canons*, the clergy of experience responsible for the work of the Cathedral, the Cathedral Chapter. The

Cathedral is the official centre of diocesan authority. In Scotland the Dean is almost the equivalent of the English Archdeacon. He takes precedence of the *Provost*, who is Rector and Head of the Cathedral. His chief duty is to administer the Diocese during a vacancy in the Bishopric.

The Archdeacons are the staff officers of the Bishop. They hold jurisdiction over geographical areas called archdeaconries, their special responsibility being to see that the fabric of the Church is in order. In England and Wales there are usually two or more archdeacons in each diocese; in Ireland there is one; in Scotland none.

The Rural Deans in England, Wales and Ireland are the leading incumbents in the rural deaneries, into which the archdeaconries are sub-divided, and which consist on an average of 20 parishes. The Rural Dean presides over the Ruri-Decanal Chapter and the Ruri-Decanal Conference.

Rectors and Vicars are the parish priests, the rectors receiving directly, all, the vicars indirectly through a chapter, college or layman, a portion of, the ecclesiastical dues and endowments of their benefices.

Assistant Curates are unbeneficed clergymen who assist the incumbents of parishes.

The Deacons form the third order of the clergy (Bishops, Priests, Deacons). They correspond to the probationers of the Presbyterian order and have ordination and licence to preach but not to pronounce the Absolution or the Benediction, or to celebrate the Holy Communion; and only to baptise " in the absence of the priest." The diaconate usually lasts one year.

The Churches of the Anglican Communion in Great Britain and Ireland

The Church of England.

The Convocations of Canterbury and York each have an Upper House of Bishops and a Lower House of Clergy, the former embracing all the diocesan bishops of the province, the Archbishop presiding; the latter consisting of the deans and other representatives of the cathedral chapters, two archdeacons from each diocese and representative clergy (called proctors) elected on a proportional basis by the clergy of each diocese. The Convocations are deliberative and legislative assemblies, among their chief functions being the promulgation of symbols of doctrinal belief, the enactment of canons and the authorization of liturgical formularies. They meet two or three times a year in London and York respectively, when Parliament is in session.

The National Assembly of the Church of England was instituted in 1919 to meet the increasing demand for lay representation in the councils of the Church, and to expedite the passing of Church legislation through Parliament. It consists of three Houses : (1) The House of Bishops, the members of the Upper Houses of the two Convocations; (2) the House of Clergy, the members of the Lower Houses of the two Convocations ; (3) the House of Laity, representatives (men and women) of the laity of the two provinces. Total membership in 1930 was 701 made up of 43 bishops, 315 clergy, 343 laity. It meets three times a year for five days at a time, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York being respectively Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Its most important work is to pass and obtain statutory authority for measures. It also adopts an annual budget, prepared by the Central Board of Finance, for the allocation of diocesan contributions for central church work, receives reports on the work of the Church in general, and passes "regulations" on matters which do not require Parliamentary sanction. It may not promulgate any statement defining the doctrine of the Church of England on any question of theology.

The Diocesan Synod is an ecclesiastical council in which the Bishop consults with the clergy of the Diocese on the affairs of the Church.

The Cathedral and Ruri-Decanal Chapters are ecclesiastical councils in which the Dean and Clergy and the Rural-Dean and Clergy confer on matters affecting the worship and work of the Church in the Cathedral and Rural Deanery respectively.

The Diocesan Conference, with its Chamber of Clergy and its Chamber of Laity, meets under the chairmanship of the Bishop, usually twice a year, once for general diocesan business and once to pass the diocesan budget for diocesan and central church work submitted by the Diocesan Board of Finance.

The Ruri-Decanal Conference is composed of the clergy of the rural deanery and lay representatives elected by the annual parochial church meetings in the several parishes of the rural deanery, and meets for general church business usually once a quarter. The Rural Dean presides.

The Parochial Church Council is composed of the incumbent, who presides, the assistant curates, the churchwardens, and lay representatives elected by

the annual parochial church meeting. Its primary duty is to co-operate with the incumbent in the initiation and development of church work both in the parish and outside. It arranges the parochial church budget, cares for the fabric and ornaments of the church, and is the normal channel of communication between the parishioners and the Bishop with regard to any matter affecting the welfare of the Church in the parish.

The Vestry, an assembly of parishioners, whose ancient powers have almost all been taken over by the Parochial Church Council, meets now only for the election of the Churchwardens and Sidesmen and to administer ecclesiastical charities.

The Courts of the Church of England.

The Archdeacon's Court, the Diocesan or Consistory (usually so-called) Court, the Provincial Court [The Court of Arches (Canterbury); the Chancery Court of York].

The Church in Wales.

The Governing Church Body—506 members, the Archbishop, 5 Diocesan Bishops, 1 Bishop—suffragan, 1 retired Bishop, 4 Deans, and 12 Archdeacons, all *ex officio*, 2 life members, 25 Clerical and 50 Lay representatives elected triennially by each of the 6 Diocesan Conferences, and 10 Clerical and 20 Lay members co-opted by the Governing Body—the Supreme Legislative and Governing Body. It meets at least once annually. The Archbishop is its President.

The Representative Church Body—105 members, the Archbishop, 5 Diocesan Bishops, *ex officio*, 2 life members, 4 Clerical and 8 Lay representatives elected for 3 years by each Diocesan Conference, 5 Clerical and 10 Lay members co-opted by the whole body, and 10 members nominated by the Archbishop and Bishops acting conjointly—holds the property of the Church in Wales and discharges purely financial and administrative functions. It is presided over by a Chairman elected triennially.

The Cathedral and Ruri-Decanal Chapters.

The Diocesan Conference.

The Ruri-Decanal Conference.

The Parochial Church Council: the Vestry.

The Courts of the Church in Wales.

The Archdeacon's Court, the Diocesan Court, the Provincial Court, the Special Provincial Court (to dispose of any charge against a bishop), the Supreme Court of the Church in Wales (to dispose of any charge against the Archbishop).

The Church of Ireland

The General Synod: The House of Bishops and the House of Representatives sit together in full Synod for deliberation and transaction of business. The House of Bishops consists of the 2 Archbishops and 11 Diocesan Bishops; the House of Representatives, elected triennially, of 216 representatives of the Clergy and 432 representatives of the Laity. The Primate presides. The General Synod has chief legislative power in the Church, and such administrative power as may be necessary for the

Church and consistent with its Episcopal constitution.

The Representative Church Body, elected and controlled by the General Synod and consisting of the 2 Archbishops, 11 Bishops, and 52 Clerical and Lay Representatives, holds the property of the Church in trust and manages the financial, legal and executive affairs of the Church.

The Diocesan Synod consists of the Bishop, Clergy and 2 Lay Representatives to each Clerical member. It meets annually and elects the *Diocesan Council*, which, under the chairmanship of the Bishop, meets monthly, and manages Diocesan affairs.

The General Vestry, comprising all communicants of 21 years and over, men and women, meets annually at Easter, to elect the Select Vestry and office-bearers, and at such times as occasion arises. The *Select Vestry* consists of the Incumbent and his Curates, if any, the Churchwardens, and not more than 12 other persons. It has control and charge of all church funds and buildings.

The Courts of the Church of Ireland

The Diocesan Court, the Court of the General Synod.

The Episcopal Church in Scotland

The Episcopal Synod, composed of the Bishops of the Church, meets once a year or when specially called. It receives and determines various appeals, e.g., appeals against the resolutions and decisions of the Bishops in their Diocesan Synods.

The Provincial Synod, with its First Chamber composed of the Bishops and its Second Chamber consisting of Representatives of the Clergy in the several dioceses, is called when circumstances require by the Bishops of the Episcopal Synod assembled. It has the sole power of legislating for the Church by the enactment of canons, but has no judicial power either primarily or on appeal.

The Diocesan Synod consists of the Bishop and all the instituted and licensed clergy in the Diocese. It meets normally once a year and deals with all spiritual matters affecting the Church as distinct from financial matters.

The Consultative Council on Church Legislation gives the laity, conjointly with the clergy, opportunity of considering proposed alterations in the code of canons that may be submitted to the Bishops, and of suggesting subjects for legislation that seem to be required for the welfare of the Church. The Council consists of the Bishops, and Representative Clergy and Representative Laity in equal numbers.

The Representative Church Council consisting of the Bishops, all clergymen (Priests and Deacons) in active work, retired clergymen who have twenty yesrs' service in the Scottish Church and live in Scotland, and one lay representative of either sex from each congregation within each Diocese, together with the Diocesan officials, is the organ of the Church in matters of finance. It takes cognizance of the whole financial affairs of the Church, has custody of the corporate funds (so far as committed to it), and collects and distributes money for all Church purposes of a general or corporate character. It also considers general

questions affecting the interests of the Church, and when so minded refers them to the Consultative Council on Church Legislation for its consideration. It meets annually, or oftener if required, in one or other of the large towns of Scotland.

The Diocesan Council. In each diocese there is a Diocesan Council under the Presidency of the Bishop, consisting of the Clergy and Lay members of the Representative Church Council within the Diocese, with such added Lay members as it may co-opt, which promotes the general work of the Representative Church Council within the Diocese. It meets annually or oftener if required.

The Vestry is the managing body of a congregation. It consists of the Rector, the Churchwardens and a number of laymen (varying in different congregations). The duties of the Vestry are confined to the temporal affairs of the congregation.

The Central Funds Committee is a committee of the congregation elected annually to collect money for the various schemes of the Church which are administered by the Representative Church Council.

The Courts of the Episcopal Church in Scotland.

The Bishop in Synod with right of appeal to the Episcopal Synod.

Offices open to Episcopalian Laity.

Lay Readers, appointed to read the Common Prayer and Holy Scriptures, together with *Deaconesses* and *Lay Workers*, assist in the spiritual work of the parishes.

The Churchwardens, of whom there are usually two in each parish, an "incumbent's" and a "people's," are charged with the care of the ecclesiastical property of the parish, the provision of the necessaries for divine worship, and the preservation of order and decorum during divine service. They are chosen annually at Easter.

Lay Representatives are communicants of not less than 21 years of age and of either sex,[1] who are elected each year for varying periods either directly or indirectly by the congregation to serve *in England* on the Parochial Church Council; the Ruri-Decanal Conference, the Diocesan Conference, the House of Laity: *in Wales* on the Parochial Church Council; the Ruri-Decanal Conference; the Diocesan Conference; the Representative Church Body; the Governing Church Body: *in Ireland* on the Diocesan Synod; the General Synod: *in Scotland* on the Diocesan Council; the Representative Church Council.

Lay Episcopal Electors (in Wales) are lay representatives chosen by each Diocesan Conference to serve, according to regulation, as members of the Electoral Colleges, which elect the Archbishop and the Bishops respectively. *Lay Electors* (in Scotland) are male communicants of not less than 24 years of age, elected, one by each incumbency and qualified Mission Charge to represent the congregation at, and vote in, the election of the Bishop.

[1] Except in the Church of Ireland. A bill to remove the sex disqualification was defeated by one vote in the General Synod of 1930.

The Presbyterian Courts as Exemplified in the Church of Scotland.

The Kirk Session exercises rule ministerially under Christ in all matters affecting the spiritual well-being and order of a congregation. It is responsible for the administration of ordinances, the oversight of church members, the care of the young and the maintenance of the congregation's interest in the work of the Church at home and abroad. It exercises discipline. It appoints the church-officer and the leader of praise. It cannot meet except as convened by its moderator or a minister deputed by him or the presbytery. Its auxiliary court or committee—(Deacons' Court, Board of Managers or Trustees)—dealing with the temporal affairs of the congregation enjoys a distinct jurisdiction upon which the Session cannot intrude, but it is not authorised to exercise any kind of spiritual rule or to review the action of the moderator or the Session. Equally with the Session it is under the immediate jurisdiction of the Presbytery. Many women serve as deacons or managers in the Church of Scotland. Women are now admitted to the eldership in the Presbyterian Church of England.

The Presbytery, composed of ministers and representative elders in equal numbers, deals with such matters as the acceptance and oversight of students for the ministry, the licensing of probationers, the oversight of licentiates and ministers without charge, the oversight of vacant congregations, the calling and settling of ministers and the supply of ordinances within the bounds. It exercises discipline over ministers and probationers. It

reviews the work of all the congregations within the bounds and receives petitions from kirk sessions, office-bearers or members in respect of congregational matters. It transmits proposals in regard to legislation in the form of overtures, and applications from ministers for admission to the Church, etc., to the General Assembly; reports in respect of the setting up of sanctioned charges or the discontinuance of the same to the Synod; and appoints the commissioners to the General Assembly.

The Synod is often held to be a superfluous court, yet it discharges important functions, of which the chief are the sanctioning of new congregations within the bounds and the reducing or dissolving of sanctioned charges.

The General Assembly exercises a threefold function, legislative, judicial and administrative. As a legislative assembly, it deliberates on matters which concern the whole Church in her doctrine, worship, discipline and government, and declares the mind of the Church thereupon, so as from time to time to determine and regulate its constitution and laws; but it never passes any matter which involves " alteration or innovation in either doctrine or worship or discipline or government " into a " binding rule " without first submitting it to the Presbyteries for their consideration, and only passes it after the approval of a majority of Presbyteries has been obtained. This is in conformity with the Barrier Act, 1687, which was designed to prevent hasty legislation, and ensures that no proposal affecting doctrine, worship, discipline or government will be passed by the Assembly before the mind of

the Church has been prepared for its hearty and intelligent acceptance.

The Assembly's judicial decisions are irreversible. They cannot be appealed against by minorities or aggrieved persons, nor can they be rescinded by future Assemblies: yet they do not bind future Assemblies in their consideration of similar cases.

In its administrative capacity the Assembly sanctions the general arrangements for carrying on the Church's work at home and abroad, which it delegates to a number of standing committees, each of the great departments of the Church's work being under the supervision of its own committee, with its permanent secretary or secretaries and requisite staff.

The Organization of the Congregational Churches.

Congregationalism believes in no outward authority, but looks to Christ Himself as the Head of the Church. In all matters of government the members of the church themselves exercise control, and in all decisions their voice is the final authority.

The Church Meeting, composed exclusively of the members of the church, is therefore the final court of appeal in all matters concerning the conduct of the business or worship of the congregation. Its principal spiritual function is to consider applications for membership on the report of one or two members appointed to visit applicants. It also decides upon the call to a minister and the election of office-bearers. It supervises the church's administration and work, receiving reports from time to time from the Deacons' Court and from the various

organizations of the church. It meets annually or quarterly or monthly.

The Deacons perform a spiritual and an administrative function. They officiate at Communion, deliberate on the spiritual life of the congregation, and interest themselves in the whole work of the church. They also watch over the congregation's temporal affairs and manage its finances. *The Deacons' Court* is the Executive of the church acting on behalf of the Church Meeting, to which it regularly reports. The deacons are, as a rule, elected for a term of years, retiring officers being eligible for re-election. The Deacons' Court meets monthly. The minister presides. In Scotland, on account of the Presbyterian origin of a proportion of the churches, the office-bearers often consist of Elders, who take over the spiritual functions of the Deacon, and Managers or Deacons who discharge his administrative functions. They may even consist of Elders whose office is wholly spiritual, Managers who manage the church's temporal affairs, and Deacons who administer the Fellowship Fund for the help of those in need. In churches in which the functions of the deacon are thus divided, it is more or less the practice to make the Elders entirely responsible for the acceptance of new members. The minister always presides at *the Elders' Meeting*. But the President of the church, elected annually, presides at *the Managers' Meetings* and at the *Annual Church Meeting*, at which the business of the church for the year is reviewed. Managers are elected for a term of office and may be re-elected. Elders are almost always chosen for life.

For the purpose of giving expression to the spirit of fellowship and rendering mutual aid and in order to reach out in wider service, the Congregational Churches throughout the country are linked up in County or District Unions and, for the whole country, in a National Union or Federation—Congregational Union of England and Wales, the Congregational Union of Scotland, the Congregational Union of Ireland.

The County (*England*) *or District* (*Scotland*) *Union* cultivates brotherhood, aids local churches, initiates evangelistic agencies and the formation of new churches, and furthers the wider work of the denomination among the churches.

The National Union undertakes the duties and responsibilities which concern the Congregational Churches as a whole.

Representatives to County or District Unions and to the National Union are appointed at the annual Church Meeting or at such meeting as is set apart for the specific purpose. They vary in number according to the number of members in each church.

The Provincial Moderators of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

In response to a desire long felt in the Congregational Churches of England and Wales, and in order to provide for the churches the guidance and counsel of men of wide experience, set apart to devote their whole time to the service of the denomination, the Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in 1919, divided the country into nine provinces and appointed

a moderator in each. These Moderators have no power to interfere with the autonomy of individual churches. But by going in and out amongst the congregations of their provinces, learning by intimate friendship the needs of the ministers, and by close observation the circumstances of the churches, and placing at the disposal of all, their knowledge, experience and sympathy they render the greatest service, especially in difficult issues, and give inspiration and uplift wherever they go. They are appointed by the Assembly, on nomination by local representatives of the Province in conjunction with a special committee of the Union, the nomination having been previously confirmed by the Province, through its Provincial Committee or County Unions.

The Organization of the Baptist Churches.

In Church government and organization the Baptist churches are congregational, and follow generally the lines of Congregational polity described above. They too vest the final authority in all matters concerning the congregation, both spiritual and temporal, in the congregation itself. The Church Meeting and the Deacon's Court function with them exactly as in the Congregational Churches. In the majority of the churches the Deacons officiate at Communion, but in a few cases a Court of Elders is responsible. The Deacons are elected by the Church Meeting, as a rule, for a period of three or five years, at the end of which the retiring officers are eligible for re-election. The Baptist churches are affiliated in County Associations analogous to

the Congregational County or District Unions. But the Baptist Unions of Scotland and Ireland, unlike the corresponding Congregational Unions, are federated in a larger whole. They form part of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, which, like the Congregational Union of England and Wales, functions through an Assembly which meets annually,[1] and a Council meeting at least twice a year.

The Government and Organisation of the Methodist Church, 1932.

The Wesleyan, the Primitive and the United Methodist Churches contemplate union in 1932. The name of the United Church will be The Methodist Church. Its government will follow closely that of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, which is graded thus :

The Leaders' Meeting: composed of the Minister or Ministers, Class Leaders (with Assistant and Junior Leaders), Society and Poor Stewards, Circuit Stewards (if members of the Society), Representatives elected at an Annual Church Meeting, Representatives of the Sunday School, of the Foreign Missionary, Temperance and Social Welfare Committees, Secretaries of the Wesley Guilds, Wesleyan Deaconesses ; its members, who may be of either sex, must be 21 years of age and upwards; its functions are spiritual, disciplinary, financial, administrative; it must meet at least once a quarter.

[1] The Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales must meet twice a year.

The Quarterly Circuit Meeting: composed of the members of all the Leaders' Meetings in the Circuit, the Trustees of the Churches (but not of the Manses except when members otherwise) if members in the Circuit, Local Preachers, Supernumerary Ministers; it invites ministers, reviews the finance of the societies, discharges Circuit business, has a right to memorialize Conference in both its Sessions on Connexional subjects and to suggest alterations in Methodist rules and regulations; it has no disciplinary powers.

The District Synod: meets in May in two Sessions. *The Pastoral Session*, comprising all Ministers, Supernumeraries and Probationers within the bounds, who are required by Conference to attend except when granted a dispensation, considers questions affecting the character of Ministers, conducts conversations on the Work of God, receives reports on the spiritual condition of the churches and elects ministerial representatives to Conference; *the Representative Session*, composed of members of the Pastoral Session, Circuit Stewards, Representatives appointed by each Quarterly Circuit Meeting, members of certain Synod Committees, Secretaries of Synod Committees and Treasurers of Synod Funds, organizes the churches, receives reports in Church work, deals with provisional legislation referred to it by Conference and appoints lay representatives to Conference and to certain Connexional Committees; the District Synod meets also in September for financial business and to appoint its own committees.

Conference meets in July in two Sessions. In both its Sessions there is a permanent element—in

the Pastoral Session "The Hundred," a few ministerial Officials and Missionary Representatives; in the Representative Session, the Lay Treasurers of certain Funds along with 48 laymen elected by the votes of ministers and laymen present at Conference, a third of whom retire annually, the remaining members being elected by the ministerial and lay members respectively of the District Synods. *The Representative Session*, which meets first, receives reports from Synods, reviews the several Church departments, proposes or passes new legislation; *the Pastoral Session* deals with questions of doctrine, discipline, admission and stationing of ministers and pastoral oversight. (In the United Church the annual stationing of ministers will be recommended to the Pastoral Session by a joint Committee of ministerial and lay representatives.) Before provisional legislation is passed by Conference in either of its Sessions it is sent down for consideration to the corresponding Sessions of the District Synods and may even be sent to the Circuit Quarterly Meetings. The findings of Conference in both its Sessions, to be valid, must be confirmed by the vote of the Legal Hundred. (When Union is brought about the Legal Hundred will cease to exist. Its place in the Pastoral Session will be taken by an elected permanent element analogous to the 48 elected laymen at present in the Representative Session.)

CHAPTER V

THE OFFICE-BEARER'S PART IN THE WORK OF THE CONGREGATION

It is within the congregation that the office-bearer shares in the devotional life of the Church, in the means of grace, and in the nurturing disciplines and enriching fellowship which the Church provides. It is within the congregation, also, that he is enlisted in the redemptive enterprises which the Church is prosecuting in the world.

The congregation has thus for the office-bearer a twofold significance.

As the organ of worship, fellowship and service it brings the Church to him and bestows upon him all that the Church has to give. As the militant arm, corresponding to the battalion in the brigade or division of an army, which, operating on its own terrain, affords the soldier an opportunity of playing his part in a conflict which extends along a far-flung battle-line, it brings him into the Church and engages his service in an enterprise which is world-wide.

With this distinction clearly in his mind, the office-bearer who desires to be efficient should make himself acquainted with the functions which the congregation fulfils, with the principles which govern its efficient working, and with the aims which he should cherish as one who desires the

congregation in which he serves to be a perfect instrument of the Kingdom and his own service in it to be effective in the highest degree.

What the Congregation exists for: its Functions.

1. The congregation is *the Church's organ of social worship*. It is the medium in which "our reasonable service" to God—adoration, homage, praise—finds its fullest and worthiest expression. It is also the means by which the Spiritual life is quickened, nourished and comforted through the preaching of the Word, the public offices of praise and prayer and the holy Sacraments. Corporate worship lifts the worshipper into a richer and more intense experience than is possible for him in isolation and conveys blessings from above—refreshment of heart, renewal of strength and holy joy—which come in no other way. It is essential therefore to a fully developed spiritual life. The congregation's chief function is to provide for it.

2. The congregation is *a Christian school*. It provides religious education, by furnishing that knowledge of God which makes men wise unto salvation, teaching the believing man the Christian way in which to face life's vicissitudes and handle life's affairs, and equipping the well-informed Christian citizen and the expert church worker. Its subjects of instruction include the Holy Scriptures, the doctrines of the Faith, the history of the Church and the enterprises of the Kingdom at home and abroad. Without such instruction the

Christian man cannot progress in the knowledge of God, cannot develop an enlightened and sensitive conscience, cannot find inspiration and guidance for daily living and Christian service.

3. The congregation *renders community-service*. Far and wide it radiates a subtle, indefinable influence which raises the tone of social and civic life, business and sport, fostering Christian sentiment and developing a Christian conscience. If the neighbourhood is depressed or poverty-stricken, it finds opportunity for appropriate ameliorative service ; and if social wrong exists which demands public protest or concerted action, it is its duty to speak out against it and to aid in overthrowing it. The evangelisation of its own neighbourhood is its primary community-task. Every group of disciples in obeying the Lord's command to preach the gospel, everywhere, must begin at its own door.

4. The congregation *projects the service of its members beyond itself and its vicinity* and links it up with the wider service of the denomination. It presents the members with avenues of service along which their interests and energies speed to the help of national and world-wide tasks. By the diffusion of knowledge, the development of interest, public and private prayer, and the organisation of financial and material support such denominational causes as the Care of Youth, Home Evangelism, Social Work in large cities, Temperance and the Work of the Gospel overseas, become, within the congregational fellowship, part and parcel of the thought and effort of the membership. The congregation is thus a distributing centre in which the members' interest, prayers and energies are gathered

up and made effective for the world-wide service of the Kingdom of God.

5. The congregation *renders social and recreational service.* Its members naturally tend to share with one another their social and recreational life, and this necessitates within the congregation a certain amount of organisation, control, and direction. Often the provision of social and recreational ministries is demanded in the interests of the spiritual life of the members, to counteract evil associations and permit of relationships being formed which will be spiritually helpful. It is true that such ministries, unrelated to the congregation's main spiritual objective, may prove a snare, but, subordinated to the spiritual aim, they are essential to the efficient functioning of the congregation as a spiritual and evangelistic instrument, and often form a large part of the congregation's community-service. In the ideal congregation the Church lays its sanctifying hand upon the social and recreational interests of many of its members and provides, for others, activities of this nature which are wholesome and safe.

The Principles which govern the Efficient Functioning of the Congregation.

1. The congregation must always be regarded as a spiritual organism, whose chief functions are the worship of Almighty God, the awakening and fostering of spiritual life and the establishment and extension of the Kingdom of God everywhere throughout the world. These spiritual ends must have precedence over merely social and recreational

ends, and the latter must be supervised, regulated and infused with evangelical intention in order to serve the interests of the former. Otherwise, the congregation will decline in spiritual vitality, and what is meant to be a Church of God will become little better than a social club.

2. It must always be borne in mind that in the service of the Kingdom the congregation has a larger part to play than that of ministering spiritually to its own membership and rendering spiritual, social and recreational service in its own neighbourhood. The congregation is a component part of a great institution, operating—denominationally—throughout a wide area, and—as the Church catholic—everywhere throughout the world. It is the organ through which the service of the individual members is gathered up and made effective in the far-reaching enterprises of the Kingdom. This necessitates, in a living congregation, a systematic and sustained direction of mind to the larger service of the denomination. Thus there will be imparted to the members the exhilarating consciousness that their congregational service, neither self-centred nor merely parochial, is linked up with the enterprises of the whole Church, which like a mighty army is operating upon a world-wide front. Any restriction of congregational interest and effort will both depreciate the congregation's value as an instrument for the spread of the Kingdom of God, and impoverish the spiritual life of the members. In the service of the Kingdom the congregation must always be more than congregational in its outlook.

3. Endeavour must always be made to render the congregation's community-service as appropri-

ate and complete as possible. Communities differ from one another in their social level and intellectual tastes, in their affluence or need, and in the social and industrial problems which they present. This calls for the provision of appropriate congregational ministries, both in the main service which the congregation renders—the provision of ordinances and the ministry of evangelism; and in the auxiliary services—the social, recreational and ameliorative. Types of worship and gospel propaganda suitable for congregations in garden suburbs or country districts may not be at all suitable for a congregation in a city slum or for congregations in mining or industrial areas. Neither will the auxiliary services of the congregation be the same in each case. A congregation's community-service must be adapted to its community's tastes and needs. And further, the congregation must attempt a complete community-service. It must leave no need unministered to. For the congregation is designed, as Chalmers urged, to be a radiating centre of spiritual life and kindly ministry, dominating the whole territory in which it stands, making its influence felt in every street and every house, and ministering to every need.[1]

[1] "There is no lack in the life of a community which a church may not try to supply if it possesses the power. It dare not lose its sense of proportion and forget its unique ministry of the Evangel of Christ; but that Evangel has a message for every human relation. If there is a lack of healthy amusements, if civic questions require more public discussion, if the schools need supplementing with training in trades or domestic science, if mothers are ignorant of the principles of good home-making, if boys and girls are curtailed in their chances for play, if young people cannot meet under wholesome auspices, if working-men want a place to spend their leisure—in these and numberless kindred needs the Church finds a duty and an opening for her ministry. She ought not to undertake anything that some other agency—the government, or a social club, or a

4. The ideal must always be kept in view to provide in the congregation's ministries sufficient tasks to absorb the interests and energies of all the members. A dead weight of indifferent people, who are neither interested in the life of the congregation nor take part in its work, is a severe handicap to congregational efficiency. To overcome this weakness the interest of the membership in the general work of the Church must be quickened and the area of the congregation's evangelical and social ministries extended. A congregation whose interest in the Church's work is keen and which makes large demands upon its membership for congregational, community and denominational service has, as a rule, few slackers and approximates to the ideal Church in which there is work for everybody, and everybody is at work.[1]

5. In organising the work of the congregation the maxim must always be kept in view, "Organization exists for the people and not the people for organization." Congregational interests, agencies and activities are means and not ends. Their

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business house—can do as well; she will never want for work of her own. For in most communities there are any number of approaches to men and women and little children that she must attempt, and any number of services she must take in hand for them, if she is to furnish them with fulness of life with God."—Henry Sloane Coffin, *In a Day of Social Rebuilding*, page 124.

[1] "The Church exists for the Kingdom, and its members will render the largest part of their Christian service outside its walls in their homes, occupations and civic life; but it is ideal to have each of them engaged in some of the Church's ministries. By no means must work be made for them; such artificial tasks disgust socially-minded men and women. But if a church has not a task for every member, there is something wanting in its programme for the community; it can hardly have asked itself, what must be done to render this neighbourhood in every aspect a province of the Kingdom of heaven?"—Henry Sloane Coffin, *In a Day of Social Rebuilding*, page 128.

function is to promote the essential work of the congregation—to advance the Kingdom of God in the lives of the members and to enlist the members in the Church's service. This requires their adaptation and adjustment to the tastes and interests and the religious opportunities and need of the members. Congregational agencies and activities which have ceased to attract, which no longer minister to real needs or whose spiritual value is meagre or nil should be boldly scrapped or transformed. No congregational institution except the regular diets of worship is sacrosanct. And while the pursuit of novelty for its own sake is to be deprecated, originality, bold experiment and ingenuity, in keeping with the trend of modern enterprise, are of supreme value in congregational work, and these must be brought into action if means are to be so adapted to ends as to secure the maximum effectiveness.[1]

The Office-Bearer's Congregational Aims.

The aims which the office-bearer should pursue

[1] "One frequently hears of 'getting a congregation for the second service,' or of 'solving the problem of the mid-week meeting,' or of 'developing a men's association,' as though these were ends instead of means. In the Church as in our human bodies, there may be survivals of things once useful and now without a function, like the vermiform appendix. Under some circumstances, the Church organisation is the better for a surgical operation. . . . The fairly large machinery of many churches often produces no effect commensurate with its magnitude; and nothing is more depressing to minister and people than the sense that they are faithfully and painfully keeping wheels revolving which do not assist in manufacturing Christian men and women. The Church, like the Sabbath, is made for man, and no teaching, worship or activity should have a place in it that is not humanly serviceable."—Henry Sloane Coffin, *In the Day of Social Rebuilding*, page 123.

as he throws himself into congregational work, and endeavours to make his congregation as perfect a spiritual instrument as possible, will embrace the ends and be governed by the principles which we have just discussed.

Realising the congregation's duty as a Christian fellowship, he should concern himself first of all with the worship of the sanctuary. Its devotional quality, its dignity and its spiritual fruitfulness should be for him matters of supreme moment. Recognising the vital importance of the individual worshipper's contribution in corporate worship he should endeavour by his own participation in the worship of the Sanctuary, by his encouragement of others in it, and by a wise advocacy of deepening and enriching "acts of worship," to quicken the spirit and enhance the ministry of devotion within his congregation.

He should devote thought, also, to the religious education which his congregation provides, when such questions as the following will exercise his mind. Does the instruction imparted within this congregation give the members a working knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, instruct them in doctrine, build them up in life, acquaint them with the work of the Church and the enterprises of the Kingdom, and equip them for definite service? Is instruction systematically given? Is it given to juveniles and adults alike? Such questions press for an answer whenever the educational enterprise of a congregation is considered, and in pondering them the office-bearer will be led to seek both the improvement of his own religious education and also the application within his congregation, and on as

wide a scale as possible, of a comprehensive scheme of religious instruction.

Then he should think of his congregation's community service, and approving such preliminary steps as the taking of a religious survey and census of the neighbourhood, he should press for the supply of such evangelistic, social, ameliorative and recreational ministries as will make his congregation a centre of influence radiating throughout the whole vicinity, the evangelisation of the immediate neighbourhood being in his eyes at all times the most important of congregational tasks.

Again, his eye should be upon the work of his denomination and upon the wider enterprises of the Kingdom; and, desiring to see his congregation's interest, contributions, prayers and service projected to the furthest limit of the Christian Enterprise and linked up with the world-wide operations of the Church, he should throw himself enthusiastically into every endeavour which is made to extend his fellow-members' and his own interest, and to enlist their sympathy, prayers and support for the work of the Church at home and abroad.

And finally, sympathetic as he will doubtless be with the desire of many to find an outlet for their social and recreational activities within their own congregational circle, he will face up prayerfully to the admittedly difficult but necessary task of enlisting, in the service of the Kingdom, interests and activities which so easily and often compete with the claims and nullify the influence of the Church's real work.

Other aims which he should pursue are suggested by the important position which he

himself occupies in the congregation's life and service.

The minister's colleague in the most sacred of callings, he should endeavour, for one thing, by his counsel, loyal co-operation, encouragement and prayers so to assist in the work of the ministry within the congregation that its power will be increased and its range extended. If he is a Presbyterian elder, a Congregational deacon, or a Wesleyan class leader, and joins with the minister in the spiritual oversight of the flock, the pastoral visitation, and certain acts of worship, exhortation and prayer, he should seek to enhance the spiritual powers of the minister's work. If his office is a secular one, such as that of the Anglican churchwarden or the Presbyterian deacon, his aim should be to relieve the minister as much as possible of the secular affairs of the congregation. The office-bearer is the minister's right-hand man, and it is his duty and privilege to do all that he can to augment the power and increase the fruitfulness of the minister's work.

Then, as an under-shepherd of the flock and a leader in service, he should make it his constant aim to promote zeal, good feeling, spiritual health and Christian efficiency among his fellow-workers and fellow-members. His dream being to see the congregation a spiritual fellowship, a society of friends, a hive of industry in which everyone has a mind to work, he should be ready, in all that affects the interests of the congregation and promotes its fellowship and service, to give a lead to those over whom he is set in the Lord. The lead which he gives should be by example rather than by precept.

His Part in the Work of the Congregation

He should be among his fellow-workers and fellow-members as *one that serveth*. Accordingly he should interest himself in their welfare, seek to know them individually as a friend, and act towards them at all times in the Spirit of Christ. He should be their counsellor, encourager and comforter. Swift to perceive misunderstanding or disaffection, he should be ready with the gracious word or the tactful action. Despondency he should meet with good cheer, difficulty with courage and resource, and when, in any venture, circumstances favour progress he should at once and with confidence press forward. No one can so affect the morale of the congregation as the office-bearer, and it is his duty at all times to endeavour to keep his congregation's morale high.

This two-fold relationship to the minister on the one hand and the membership on the other, confers upon the office-bearer a rôle the importance of which can hardly be over-emphasized. It places him in the key position in congregational life and activity. If he is spiritually alert, well instructed and energetic, he will, as we have seen, be of the greatest assistance to the minister; he will help to keep the spiritual tone of the membership high; and, as a consequence, he will promote the practical effectiveness of the congregation as a spiritual organism. But if, on the other hand, he is in any way incompetent or indifferent, he will handicap the minister, tend to depress the spiritual tone of the membership, and as a consequence lower the practical effectiveness of the congregation in its spiritual service.

The congregation's spiritual vitality and energy depend in great measure upon his character, consecration, zeal and expertness in service, and, well

aware of this, he should constantly aim at magnifying his office and rendering the best possible service.

The All-important Question of Atmosphere.

In every congregation there is an atmosphere which plays a large part in focussing the office-bearer's aims and in giving inspiration and quality to his service.

Part of it, bequeathed from the past, is the aroma or fragrance of the congregation's heritage. Every congregation which has a history at all has a heritage. For no matter how short or long its history may be, it will be found to cherish its past, hold dear the memory of its saints, and find, in heroic epochs near or remote, inspiration for the tasks of the present. This aroma, with its ennobling memories, its rich legacies and its abiding spirit, confers upon a congregation a distinction all its own, hallowing the worship of the sanctuary with the glamour of bygone days, instilling in the members a legitimate pride as belonging to a long and faithful succession, and inspiring a sense of trusteeship which constrains to noble and persevering effort. It cannot be over-valued, and the office-bearer should both glory in it himself and seek to have it strongly transfused throughout his congregation.

Another element of the congregational atmosphere springs from the disposition or temperament of the congregation itself. Every congregation has its own disposition or temperament which determines the nature and quality of the service which it renders, and is reproduced in the character and spirit of its individual members. In this matter

of disposition or temperament no two congregations, any more than any two persons, are alike. While one is kindly, genial and warm-hearted, another may be frigid and aloof. While one possesses a strongly evangelical temper, another may be worldly and selfish. While one is progressive, anxious to keep abreast of modern developments, and ready to venture boldly along untried paths for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, another, conservative to a degree, may be intolerant of all that is new and progressive. And while one is an abode of love and a haven of peace, another, cursed with a quarrelling spirit, may never be at rest. This disposition or temperament sometimes persists through a long period of years. Sometimes it can be traced to one or two persons in the congregation. But whether it be of long duration and deeply rooted or not, it can be modified and transformed if there is a will towards that end within the congregation. Aware of this the office-bearer should seek to foster within the fellowship of his congregation kindliness, evangelical zeal, open-mindedness and brotherly love in order that the Christian virtues, springing up richly in his fellow-members, may produce a vital and energizing Christian atmosphere.

A third element in the congregational atmosphere comes from above. It has its source in the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the source of all spiritual power. Apart from Him none of the congregation's spiritual objectives can be reached. But with Him indwelling and active, there is no limit to what may be achieved in the souls of the members, and, through their consecrated service, in the world beyond. The Holy Spirit creates an

atmosphere all His own in the congregation in which He dwells. And since that atmosphere, charged as it is with devotional feeling and spiritual power, is the Christian's vital breath, the office-bearer should pray no prayer more fervently than that God will infuse the congregation in which he serves with the grace and power of His Spirit.

CHAPTER VI

THE OFFICE-BEARER AS STEWARD AND ADMINISTRATOR OF CHURCH FINANCE

Church finance will occupy no small part of the office-bearer's time and attention. For it should always be his concern to see the congregation in which he serves contributing worthily both towards its own maintenance and work, and also towards the wider enterprises of the denomination to which he belongs. Ways and means of increasing his congregation's financial vigour should therefore be to him a matter of the utmost importance, and without fail he should make it his business to know, and to advocate and apply, the principles which govern both individual and congregational liberality.

A congregation's financial vigour depends upon many factors—upon the spirituality of the congregation, upon the degree to which an interest in the Church's work has been engendered among the membership, and in which the principles of Christian giving are understood and practised by the membership, upon the methods of ingathering practised within the congregation, and upon the zeal of the office-bearers along with the businesslike—or unbusinesslike—way in which they administer the congregation's finances. These factors are coincident with the principles which govern individual

and congregational liberality, and their importance will not fail to impress the office-bearer as he studies (1) the Principles of Christian Giving, (2) the Principles and Methods of Ingathering, and (3) the Supreme Principle of Christian Stewardship.

I

THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN GIVING.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the close relationship between giving and getting. Giving, according to the Bible, is investment,[1] the amount wisely given out of a good and generous heart bringing back interest to the giver. This is true even materially.

> "It is not yet loving that emptied the heart,
> Or giving that emptied the purse."

"I am certain by years of experience," said a well-known Christian worker, "that I am not one penny the poorer for anything I have ever been able to give; what is called 'giving' is 'getting,' when it concerns God's work." Spiritually, of course, it is even more true. Giving, like mercy, is twice blessed. "It blesseth him that gives and him that takes." It fills the heart of the giver with joy, enlarges his spiritual sensibilities, and adds a Christlike quality to his character. But, most remarkable of all, it causes the spiritual energies of God to flow and brings down blessing upon men. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and

[1] Prov. iii. 9, 10. Prov. xi. 24, 25. Prov. xix. 17. Mal. iii. 10, Luke vi. 38, etc. 2 Cor. iii. 6, 10.

prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."[1] A church filled with ideal givers, therefore, will not lack spiritual blessing. According to the measure of their giving it will enjoy the outpouring of the Divine Spirit. What is an ideal giver ?

He has five marks :

1. *He gives willingly*—out of gratitude to God and love to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. *He gives intelligently*—for causes in which he is interested, whose circumstances, characteristics and progress he diligently studies and whose furtherance he sincerely desires.
3. *He gives systematically*—with due regard to time, i.e., regularly, and with due regard to his ability, i.e., proportionately.
4. *He gives prayerfully*—not simply accompanying his offerings with prayer but regarding his giving as itself an act of worship.
5. *He gives out of a sense of stewardship*—as responsible to God for the right use of everything which he possesses.

These five marks reveal the five principles of Christian giving.

1. Christian giving is *from the heart.*
2. Christian giving is *intelligent.* It knows and is interested in what it gives for.
3. Christian giving is *systematic.* It is regular and proportionate.

[1] Mal. iii. 10.

4. Christian giving is *an act of worship*, and delights to express itself in worship.
5. Christian giving is *the discharge of a trust*. It is the investing of capital which has been given to the giver to be invested by him.

The office-bearer, exemplifying these principles in his own practice, should seek to commend them to his fellow-members, that his congregation may not only wax strong financially, but may enjoy the out-pouring upon it of Divine blessing.

II

The Principles and Methods of Ingathering.

There are two systems of ingathering the offerings of church members into the Lord's Treasury, viz., the *Old System* and the *New System*.

The Old System is best described in negatives. It is a "system"—so-called—which makes no annual estimate of the income required by the congregation, which does not ask members, in view of estimated income, to offer a definite and regular contribution, and which does not employ a method to ensure continuity and induce regularity in giving. It relies upon the church plate, seat rents and the collector's book, and other auxiliary means of raising money; and while it works with moderate success in congregations trained in the principles of Christian giving, it fails as a rule to gather in all that might be raised because it does not demand of each member that his giving be systematic, i.e., thought-out, proportionate to his means, and regular; and consequently it is at the mercy of the spasmodic

support of the unintelligent and unconscientious giver.

Accordingly, in response to the modern demand for efficiency in the Church, as well as to the need for enlarged congregational incomes, and in view of the demands of the Church's world-wide programme in this new age, methods have been adopted which bring the principles of Christian giving into fuller play, with the result that not only has the liberality of the churches participating been enormously increased, but, through the educative discipline which the new methods lay upon church-members, the spiritual life of these churches has also been greatly enriched.

The New System, as promoted by the *International Association for Church Finance and Organisation*, and known as the *Weekly Freewill Offering System*, has three main features.

The Annual Budget supplies full information as to the needs of the congregation and its responsibility for the work of the Church at large. Properly prepared it shows not only the total sum required, but also the details under two heads :

(1) "For Ourselves"—necessary local expenditure.
(2) "For Others"—(*a*) various schemes of the Church at home and abroad, and (*b*) charitable and benevolent objects.

The Member's Offer signifies that the participating church-member is ready to take a thoughtful, conscientious, proportionate share in meeting the need which the Budget reveals. It embraces both "For Ourselves" and "For Others," and is binding so

long as the amounts offered are according to the member's ability to give them. If circumstances alter, the amounts may at any time be increased or decreased as desired, a slip of paper inside the envelope, stating the change, being all that is required to inaugurate a new offer.

The Weekly Dated and Numbered Envelope facilitates regular giving by making it easier

> "That tasks in hours of insight willed
> Shall be each Sunday morn fulfilled."

The Duplex (two-pocket) Envelope assists the member in apportioning his offering as between "For Ourselves" and "For Others." When the more popular Single Envelope is employed, members are invited to state the two distinct sums on the outside. Envelopes should be personally brought to church week by week. When absences occur, all arrears should be placed in the offertory at the earliest opportunity.

Other features of the system scarcely less important are *the Yearly Canvas or Visitation*, when on the issue of the Annual Budget each member is waited upon and his sealed offer for the coming year received: a simple *Method of Accounting*, by which in specially prepared cash books every contribution received into the Lord's Treasury is brought within the cognizance of the treasurer, yet absolute secrecy is preserved: and *the dedication of the offerings* during church service, by which the act of giving to God is set in its proper place as *worship* along with praise and prayer.

The secret of this system's striking success, when carefully used, lies in the extent to which it educates

and inspires church-members to give in accordance with the principles of *Christian* giving. The Budget, setting forth the congregation's needs and its responsibility for the work of the Church at large, fosters intelligent and interested giving. The necessity for thinking out the amount of the weekly offering, culminating in a definite promise, is a discipline which leads to deliberate, conscientious and proportionate giving. The weekly dated and numbered envelope facilitates regularity in giving. The dedication of the offering, as an integral part of the worship of the Sanctuary, rescues giving for church purposes from being a mere contribution and makes it a sacred act of worship. And the cumulative effect of the whole system, demanding as it does that the giver think out what he owes to God and offer to Him what is after all but His own, deepens in him the sense of his responsibility to God for the right use of all he possesses.

It is this intimate blending of the principles of Christian giving with the details of the Weekly Freewill Offering System which makes it so imperative for the complete success of the system in any congregation, that it be adopted and worked in its entirety. To drop any of its essential features, e.g., the Budget, the Annual Visitation, the Offer Card, the dating and numbering of the envelopes, the keeping of accounts, the dedication of the offerings, is simply to throw away accompanying disciplines, which are essential for the development of ideal giving. Failures, of which congregations or churches complain, are invariably traced to the jettisoning of some discipline or other, consequent upon the cutting or alteration of the system,

because of timidity, prejudice, misunderstanding or laziness.

The efficient working of the Weekly Freewill Offering System necessarily throws upon the office-bearers of the congregation a certain amount of work. But invariably the demands which it makes are cheerfully complied with, since diligence in this service carries with it the sure prospect of both financial and spiritual gain for the congregation.

The office-bearer should, therefore, throw himself earnestly into the working of the system in his own congregation, lending a hand in the preparation of the Annual Budget, in visiting his district to explain the system and receiving from the members their offer cards, and in giving assistance in the counting of the collection and the keeping of the cash books. To perform these duties efficiently he should make himself acquainted with the details of the Weekly Freewill Offering System as set forth in *Church Finance*, edited by Lord Sands, with the work of the Church generally, and with the special enterprises and schemes in which his congregation is interested, and for which provision is made in the congregational Budget.

With this equipment, the office-bearer should aim at interesting his fellow-members in everything upon which his congregation has set its heart, that their imaginations being set on fire, and their generous feelings touched, they may give liberally to the Lord's work in and through the congregation. In pursuit of this aim he should spare himself no pains, remembering as he does that the success, spiritual as well as financial, for which he prays,

depends very largely upon his own zeal and diligence.

The perfect working of the New System requires attention on the part of treasurers and finance committees to the following points :

1. A deficit in the congregational accounts ("For Ourselves") should never be met out of contributions "For Others." To obviate any danger of this, finance committees ought always to guarantee that contributions "For Others" will reach their proper objectives. Members also should be asked to state clearly on their Offer Cards the distinct sum which they are pledging themselves to give "For Others." And in order to make the right destination of the "For Others" contributions absolutely secure, there should be a separate treasury, separate cash books, and, most desirable of all, a separate treasurer for them.

2. A surplus should be allocated *pro rata* according to the amounts set down in the Budget for the various funds, or according to some other arrangement agreed upon beforehand. This checks congregational selfishness and obviates unnecessary discussion.

3. Advantage should be taken of the information given by the dated and numbered envelopes and the cash books to inform the minister, or the elder of the district, of absentees, and to take such steps as are deemed wise and expedient to recover arrears.

4. Conferences should be held from time to time with those whose duty it is to distribute the envelopes, that the service they render may be well informed and cheerfully given, of value to the treasurer in informing him of changes of address

and probable new members, and fruitful in adding to the number of those who contribute heartily through the Weekly Freewill Offering System.

5. Care should be taken not to neglect those who elect to remain outside the Weekly Freewill Offering System. Heartburning will thus be avoided, and a loss to the congregational and denominational funds prevented.

6. All possible steps should be taken to deepen the interest of the congregation in the enterprises of the Church at home and abroad, that the knowledge and love which beget generous giving may wax strong in the hearts of the members, and lead them, like the Macedonian Christians of whom St. Paul tells,[1] to give themselves unto the Lord to begin with, and then to put themselves and their liberality at the service of the Church.

It should also be particularly noted by treasurers and finance committees, whether working the Old or the New Systems, that remittances to Headquarters for the various funds and schemes of the Church should be made monthly or, at longest, quarterly. Overdraft interest is thus saved, the name of the Church, which suffers greatly on account of so many eleventh-hour appeals, kept in good repute and much anxiety avoided.

III

The Supreme Principle of Christian Stewardship.

Both in America and in this country the opinion is widely held that improvement in the mechanics

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 5, Moffat.

of Christian liberality will only increase the Church's financial vigour up to a certain definite point, which by no means exhausts the Church's latent power to give: and it is as widely recognised that what the Church needs to-day for a further development within her of the habit of Christian giving, commensurate with the demands of the world's present-day needs and of the vast enterprises to which these needs are summoning the Church, is the emergence of a new impelling motive in the hearts of Christian people. This new motive has presented itself in the Ideal of Christian Stewardship which has initiated a spiritual movement in the Churches of Canada and the United States and of several of the younger Churches of the Mission Fields, which has had remarkable results. Not only are the churches in which Stewardship is thoughtfully presented prospering, but there has been awakened in them a larger vision of the Church's mission in the world, a new conception of individual Christian responsibility for the Church's work, a deepened spiritual life and a new spirit of enterprise in the service of the Kingdom.

Christian Stewardship is not a mere money-raising device. It is a gospel, enshrining the basic principle of Christian living, serving and giving. It admits of a simple definition, viz., the recognition of our responsibility to God as stewards of everything we are and have—life, time, talents, possessions, spiritual resources; and our dedication of everything we are and have to Him. It covers the whole area of the Christian life. It is a rule of life affecting not only the use of one's material possessions, but the use of one's body, mind,

emotions, will, the time at one's disposal, one's cultural and recreational opportunities, all the human relationships in which one is placed. As regards money it is concerned not only with giving, but also with getting and using. It controls the spirit and the method of the acquisition, investment and expenditure of money. In a word, Christian Stewardship is the essentially Christian attitude towards life and service.

As Christian Stewards we stand before God not simply as givers but as administrators, as men and women whom God trusts, and to whom He has entrusted all the resources of life, that we may adequately discharge our responsibility to Him as His partners in redemptive service.

Such a doctrine cannot but have an incalculable effect upon character and service. It claims the whole personality for Christ—all that one can do—all that one possesses.

Of course this ideal is not a new thing in Christian thought or practice. Implicit in the Old Testament, it occupied a large place in our Lord's teaching, inspired His earthly ministry, and found full expression in His Cross. It was cherished and practised by the Early Church and has been the key-note of individual Christian lives throughout the centuries. But, as has been the case with other great truths, it lay for many centuries in the background of the Church's thought until called forth by the challenge and need of the present age.

It is undoubtedly a gospel for to-day—a message as capable of being preached and as likely to elicit a widespread response as was the Franciscan Gospel of Poverty and Love in the thirteenth century, or

Luther's Doctrine of Justification by Faith at the Reformation. No ideal is so calculated to counteract the materialistic tendencies of the present, the deadened sense of responsibility in the modern world and the widespread indifference which prevails. No ideal gives such promise of providing the initial impulse and sustained dynamic which are requisite if the Church is adequately and successfully to meet the challenge and opportunity of to-day. "On all sides," says an American advocate of Stewardship, "it is being recognised that the fulfilment of the Divine programme for the redemption of mankind waits upon the acknowledgment of God's claims upon man's possessions; in order adequately to finance that programme more is necessary than mere improvement in the method of giving: what is required is a radical change of attitude by dedicating the first fruits of every income and likewise of life itself to the service of God for the good of men."

The spread of this principle among Christian people will undoubtedly bring great spiritual gain to the Church. It will invoke a deeper appreciation of the privileges of membership in Christ's Church, inspire a larger vision of the Church's mission in the world, and quicken the sense of individual responsibility. It will lead to fuller consecration and a greater readiness to undertake service both in the Church and in civic and public life. And, above all, it will revolutionize present-day ideas of what Christian giving is, inspiring in Christian people a giving that is adequate, proportionate and in accordance with scriptural principles.

Christian Stewardship will abolish financial abuses

in the Church and solve its financial problems. For, when church members, as faithful stewards of all they possess, venture all they possibly can upon the Lord's work, unworthy methods of raising money for Christian work will altogether disappear, and that bitter word "retrenchment," which so often pains the heart to-day, will cease to be heard in connection with any Christian enterprise. With the full value of money secured among Christian people for the highest ends in life, and a real sense of stewardship—of personality as well as possessions—prevailing in the Church, there will always be enough and to spare in the Lord's Treasury, and the ranks of the Church's ministers, missionaries, office-bearers and workers will always be full.

CHAPTER VII

THE OFFICE-BEARER AS CHRISTIAN CITIZEN

The field in which the Christian man performs his Christian service does not lie altogether within the Church. A large part of it lies outside in the community. In this extra-congregational or extra-church sphere the Christian man represents the Church and is the instrument by which the Church brings the principles of the Kingdom of God to bear upon the life of the community; through him the Church works towards a more Christian social and industrial order, from which the impediments which prevent men from living the good life of the Kingdom in the midst of the world will have been removed. Because of this the office-bearer should greatly prize his citizen service and eagerly seize the opportunity thus presented of prosecuting those redemptive social aims which must be realised if the full and unimpeded life of the Kingdom is to wax strong among men.

Indeed so important and far-reaching in its influence should his citizen service appear to him to be, that he should be at great pains to perform it effectively. As a consequence not only should he strive to be all that a Christian man should be—moral, well-behaved, just, law-abiding, loyal and public-spirited—but he should seek to possess a

civic conscience, to be ever ready to take his own share of work or responsibility, however small or humble, and to discharge every civic duty diligently, in a prompt, intelligent, orderly manner—as though the whole well-being of the community depended upon his individual action. The civic vices—selfish individualism, civic indifference or apathy, and corruptibility—his pet antipathies, he should persistently strive to have eradicated from the community. And appreciating, as he doubtless will, how the Church's task of evangelism and the Spirit's work of sanctification are hampered by non-Christian social and industrial conditions, he should feel to the full the obligation which rests upon Christian folk to preach and apply the Gospel's social as well as its individualistic message. The application of the Gospel to social and industrial conditions should accordingly be a task which, as a Christian citizen, he will find means of discharging in three ways by (1) service, (2) the use of his vote and (3) the support of causes whose advancement depends upon the enlightenment of the public conscience.

I

The spheres in which he will find opportunity of serving the Kingdom of God in the community may be summarised as follows :

1. In the ordinary routine of every day—in his home, or at his business, or wherever he may be—he may serve the highest interests of the community simply by living as a sincere, upright, brotherly,

Christian man. No man liveth unto himself. Every man radiates an influence far and wide throughout the world in which he moves. Accordingly when a man, in the course of the daily round, shares life with others in the Christian Spirit his influence for good is beyond calculation. Incalculable also is the extent to which he contributes to the building up of the Kingdom in the lives of others. In the days of Nehemiah, it is recorded, as each man built about his own door, a new Jerusalem became visible; so, as the Christian citizen builds his routine life according to the plan of Christ, he builds far better than he knows, and helps the Church to build the Kingdom of God in the world.

2. In the large and extending sphere of social service he may find ample opportunity of rendering definite Christian service in the community. Social service is a modern activity. In former days it was the Church that cared for the young, poor, sick, handicapped, and sought a solution of the social problems of each passing century, as for example in the ameliorative work of the monasteries, in the theocratic rule of John Calvin's Geneva, and in the territorial experiment of Dr. Chalmers in St. John's Parish, Glasgow.

But the social legislation of modern times, the scientific study of present-day social problems, and the spirit of philanthropy and service so pronounced in the modern world, have led to a great activity outside the Church and to the launching by bodies of a national and local character, under statutory and voluntary auspices, of social enterprises embracing the full ambit of social needs, financed by

the State and the benevolent public, and staffed by highly trained workers.

It is impossible even to catalogue the variety of services rendered by these agencies, but mention may be made of certain illustrative classes: Poor Law Administration; Health and Sickness—including Maternity, Infant and Child Welfare, Hospital Services, Nursing and Hygiene; Education—Statutory and Voluntary, Elementary, Higher and Adult; Juvenile Welfare; Welfare in Industry; Relief in Distress; Reformative and Rescue Work. Many of these social services have no direct connection with organised religion except through the people who participate in them. Church members and adherents, therefore, who give themselves to social service are liaison workers, bringing the spiritual influences of the Church into the organisations in which they serve and finding in these organisations opportunities to attract within the Church's ministries many who are outside. Their participation in these activities helps to counteract the danger which besets some forms of social service of becoming secularised, while at the same time it arouses within the Church a prayerful interest in what after all are genuine enterprises of the Kingdom.

3. The administrative side of local government, comprising the committee work of our municipal and county councils, provides another sphere in which the Christian citizen may serve the Kingdom of God in the community. "The supervision of the streets, the watchful eye that has to be kept on betting and prostitution, the renewal and reduction of licences, the ceaseless conflict with

all the manifold causes of disease, the provision of open spaces, the strenuous endeavours for more and better houses; and even the supply of sinks and wash-houses and the placing of street lamps in dark lanes and entries—there was a time when councillors never troubled their heads about these subjects, and when the Church never suspected that they had anything to do with the saving of souls. . . . But to-day in the struggling mission-hall in the slums, or the down-town parish church, all this is understood well enough. For there something is known of the dreadful power of temptation. When men and women are at grips, saving poor souls out of the fire, what wonder if they will curse the open doors of the public-house, or the dark alley where each night lust lies in wait for innocence, or the crowded bedroom where decency would be a problem to an archangel, or the backyard whose miserable washing arrangements break the heart of the housewife in her weary struggle against dirt, and demoralise a whole family ? "[1]

It is beyond question that in work of this kind the Christian as citizen renders the Church most valuable service.

4. The arena of public life—Trade Union, Municipal, County Council, Political—presents one of the most honourable fields in which to render Christian service. It is a field from which many—well qualified to serve the Church in it—shrink, because of the fierce light which beats upon this form of service, because of the atmosphere of intrigue, compromise, degrading give-and-take and even corruption with which it is sometimes permeated,

[1] W. F. Lofthouse, *Christianity in Action*, page 79.

and because it is so exclusively concerned with "worldly" rather than "spiritual" things. These factors render all the more imperative the need for Christian men and women of sterling character and high ideals to give themselves to public service; for if adherents of the Church, well qualified and of proved worth, fail to enter the arena of public life, how is its tone ever to be raised to a higher Christian level, and how are public affairs to be ordered according to Christian principles?

The very difficulty of this service makes success in it all the more conspicuous: and so essential is it for the true life of man that the utmost support should be given to those who find in it their "reasonable service." For quite as truly as the foreign missionary or the slum-worker do they represent the ordinary rank and file of the Church in one of the high places of the field where Christ must be honoured, if His kingdom in all its fullness is to come.

II

In the use of his vote, the office-bearer has three great legislative objectives to which he should give precedence over all other political aims, since by the attainment or non-attainment of these objectives the coming of the Kingdom into the life of the world is furthered or hindered.

1. He should seek the control, restriction and ultimate eradication of such great national evils as drink, gambling, impurity, which destroy character, hope and life, impede progress and nullify the work of the Gospel. This end he should pursue

by taking a personal stand against these evils, by supporting steps to enlighten public opinion with regard to them, and by casting his vote for such measures as he believes will curb or cure them.

2. He should seek to procure for the rising generation a sound system of education, which, while not in any way sectarian, will have religion, the Bible, and Christian principles at the heart of it.

3. He should seek such a transformation of the environment and such an adjustment of the conditions of life—e.g., in regard to Public Health, Housing, Conditions of Labour, etc.—as will lead to the removal of stumbling-blocks from the path of those who would live a full Christian life, and procure for the individual citizen as large an opportunity as possible for Christian well-doing.

III

The causes whose advancement depends upon the enlightenment of public opinion comprise such legislative reforms as relate to Drink, Gambling, etc., the safeguarding of prized privileges and dear-bought liberties, progress towards a more Christian social and industrial order, the cultivation of a right attitude towards foreigners and coloured peoples through the removal of national and racial antipathies, and the promotion of World Peace.

These and all other causes affecting life and conduct, which depend for their furtherance upon the development of a more Christian public opinion, should always have the office-bearer's hearty support. But three causes in particular he should be at special pains to further, since they are fundamen-

tal to the maintenance and progress of evangelical religion in the modern world, and must be safeguarded and advanced at all costs if the Church is to succeed in winning the present age for Christ. They are (1) the preservation of the Lord's Day, (2) the defence of our Protestant liberties, and (3) the further development of the League of Nations.

These three great causes are threatened to-day by powerful and insidious forces, and the responsibility rests upon everyone who appreciates their value to "make some conscience"[1] of them, and by persistent advocacy to advance them in the public estimation.

IV

Holding the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world to be the supreme aim of all his service, both as worker in the Church and as citizen in the community, and recognising how his church-service and his citizen-service mutually depend and react upon one another, the office-bearer should have no divided loyalties, nor should he count his citizen-service in any way inferior to or less important than his Church or congregational service. In his eyes each should appear to play an equally essential part in the bringing in of the Kingdom among men. As a consequence, he should throw himself into each with the same high aims and the same hopeful energy. In each he should serve in obedience to the same divine command, relying upon the same divine resources and enjoying the same divine companionship. And in each he should give

[1] Oliver Cromwell.

voice to his high determination in the same sublime words :

> "I will not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land."

CHAPTER VIII

THE OFFICE-BEARER'S CARE OF HIMSELF AS A CHRISTIAN MAN

THE quality of the office-bearer's service depends upon what he is in himself as a Christian man. If, therefore, he would render the best possible service, he must be careful to maintain his Christian integrity, and take pains to increase his capacity for service by developing his innate powers, by availing himself of the means of grace for the deepening of his spiritual nature, and by allying himself with and yielding to the gracious energies of the Holy Spirit.

I

The maintenance of his Christian integrity will demand of him constant vigilance and moral discipline. It will call for much thought and prayer, self-denial and perseverance.

In a world full of temptations, solicited daily to conform to standards less Christian than his own, and subjected to the pull of his own lower nature, he must be ever on his guard lest he be led into conduct which belies his Christian profession. For, since the chief aim of a Christian's service is to win others to the life he himself professes to live, his service will be gravely prejudiced if he fails,

even in the slightest degree, to live up to his Christian profession. His lack of consistency will certainly minimise and may altogether destroy his influence for good; indeed it may even engender in him an influence that is positively baneful; and since it will also tend to throw him out of touch with the divine source of power, his service will be robbed of real strength and joy.

Accordingly, for the sake of his Master's honour, as well as for his own sake, the office-bearer must take pains to increase the vitality of his spiritual nature. Only so will he be able on all occasions to witness a good confession before his fellow men. Only so will he be sincere and consistent in all things, able to say to everything that is evil, detrimental or even merely doubtful

> " Stand thou on that side
> For on this am I."

II

The great training ground for Christian service is the school of practical experience. And so, office-bearers and church workers, even when theoretical instruction and kindly advice is given them by those who are experienced in the work, only develop power for service, and attain proficiency in their tasks, by the process of experiment— " solvitur ambulando."

This procedure Father Dolling, in his humorous way, called " the swimming bath method." " For just as a boy," he used to say, " may be taught to swim by being made to jump into the swimming pond and get out as best he can, so Christian

workers, by being constrained to throw themselves into their tasks, gain the requisite gifts and graces for them by simply trying their best to do them."

This somewhat haphazard and venturesome method of training is surprisingly effective. Nowhere is there so much excellent work rendered without any specific training, and nowhere do workers so quickly become proficient in their task, as in the service of the Church—a circumstance due no doubt to the fact that church workers on the whole are eager and ready to take pains. The large measure of success attending this method rebukes the diffidence and proneness to discouragement which are the banes of Christian service. If the diffident who shrink from proffered service because they distrust their own powers, and the discouraged who cease from service because they have found it difficult, would only assure themselves that their tasks are of God, and courageously venture upon them, trusting themselves to God, they would find that they really possess powers equal to the demands made upon them, and that the difficulties which confront them have a wonderful way of resolving themselves.

Indeed a Christian worker who has faith—in God and in the God-appointed nature of his own service—and who boldly tackles his difficult task—provided of course that he and his task are suited to each other—invariably finds (1) that his powers are far greater than he ever realised ; (2) that God's help is a real thing—for, as Professor William James put it at the close of " The Varieties of Religious Experience," there are higher energies which " filter in; " and (3) that there is a divine

direction and disposing in all his service, since he finds the iron gates of circumstance continually opening of their own accord, and that conviction deepening in his mind to which George Eliot's Silas Marner gave utterance when he said with brave simplicity, "There's dealings wi' us, there's dealings."

The great workers of Scripture and of every age of the Church's history testify that these things are so ; and if the office-bearer has the courage of faith to try them out in his own experience, he will verify them also.

III

The care of his inner life—so essential to his effective service for the Kingdom of God—will involve, for the office-bearer, a diligent use of the exercises of devotion, public and private—worship, prayer, participation in the sacraments, study of the Word, meditation—which on their subjective side are called the means of grace.

The exercises of devotion have been expressly appointed for the nurture of the spiritual life. They enable us to live our lives in God, to practise His presence, to maintain a filial relationship with Him, to enter into His mind, to explore His will and yield ourselves to it. They afford us spiritual recuperation and repair, illumination of mind, encouragement and comfort of heart, the strength which invigorates and sustains—in a word, everything requisite to refit us when soiled and tired and hurt through contact with the world, and to uphold us and maintain our strength when our service is

hard. They lift us above the present world ; they help us to believe in

> " One far off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves ; "

they assure us of a watchful Providence; and they cast on our souls the light of immortal hope. They bring heavenly powers into the soul and lead the soul into gracious experiences, deepening and enriching the spiritual nature, and fostering the growth of the Christ-like personality.

An office-bearer who really desires to be a good servant of the Kingdom will not fail to become aware of his need of the spiritual blessings which the means of grace bestow, and in his desire to secure the greatest possible benefit from his religious exercises, he will regulate his devotional life according to principles which ensure their most profitable use.

(1) He will be regular in his use of the means of grace. The corporate worship of the Sabbath day he will regard as a provision for his spiritual nourishment and growth in grace which, like his daily meals in the physical sphere, he dare not miss; and in his family and personal life he will keep inviolate his set times of quiet in which the Word of God is reverently studied and the Throne of Grace approached in prayer.

(2) Recognising that the blessing which the means of grace bestow depends upon the worshipper's frame of mind, he will always approach them in preparedness of heart. He will be as careful to seek a proper " frame " in his private devotions and before an ordinary Church service as before partaking of the Lord's Supper.

(3) He will be quite clear as to his own real desire in the exercise of devotion. He will realise that a soul in harmony with the Divine Will is his primary aim. It is only as there is inward harmony between the soul and God that it is possible to worship in spirit and in truth and to experience "the joy of the Lord." And so the words of George Müller of Bristol may well express the faithful office-bearer's aim: "I saw more clearly than ever," ran the testimony of the great philanthropist, "that the first, great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord, or how I might glorify the Lord, but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world, and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit."

IV

The Holy Spirit in His gracious working in the world and in the believing heart provides energies of which the office-bearer must avail himself, both in his service for the Kingdom and in his quest of spiritual illumination. Only through the strengthening and enrichment of his own life can his service

be rendered in fulness of power. The task of the Holy Spirit is to bring in the Kingdom—a task which He is accomplishing in the world by kindling fresh spiritual life in every soul which welcomes His influence, by cleansing the conscience, illuminating the mind, energising the will, sanctifying the spirit and creating the Christ-like personality.

So completely does He take possession of the soul which yields itself to Him that, with its powers thus enlarged, it becomes an instrument in His hand for the redemptive service of the Kingdom. To be thus inspired and used by the Holy Spirit as He works in the world is the worthiest of all ambitions. For it means an infinitely serviceable life. But it is only a *praying* man who can have such a life. Only by prayer can the soul become aligned with the purposes of God and receive the divine energy into itself.

Prayer, therefore, must be the serious occupation of the office-bearer who desires to see Christ's Kingdom advancing in the world, and to share in its work—not casual or formal prayer, but earnest, importunate, wrestling prayer, such as is summed up in two great petitions: (1) that the Holy Spirit may triumph everywhere in His working and so hasten the coming of Christ's Kingdom in the world; and (2) that the Holy Spirit may work mightily in and through him. The former of these petitions is the most needed prayer in the Church to-day, and, if offered earnestly by the whole Church, it would completely change the history of the world. The latter holds the secret of all joyous and fruitful service. For the service which counts with God, advancing the Kingdom, filling the heart with joy

and ennobling the character of him who serves, is that which is rendered in the power of the Spirit.

> "Do not pray for easy lives! Pray to be stronger men! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers! Pray for powers equal to your tasks! Then the doing of your task shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come in you by the grace of God."
>
> PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Part III

TOWARDS A HIGHER EFFICIENCY

CHAPTER I

PRESENT-DAY MOVEMENTS TOWARDS HIGHER EFFICIENCY IN THE CHURCH

If the Church is to become what it must of necessity be in order to serve the age effectively—a working force of serving people, spiritually alive, interested in and enthusiastic for the service of the Kingdom, and equipped and trained after the manner which we have described, it must press on vigorously, not merely in its evangelical enterprise, but towards an educational awakening and a greatly enlarged and intensified service—in a word, it must take steps to supplement its spiritual activities by giving its members systematic and sustained instruction in the nature, demands, responsibilities, and opportunities of its own task, and at the same time seek to inspire in them such a sense of responsibility for the prosecution of its aims as will favour and even induce a deepening and enriching of their spiritual life, and lead them to greatly enlarged and intensified service.

Two movements, making for a higher spiritual efficiency, can be discerned in the Church to-day, each pressing in one of these two directions. The first may be described as the Church seeking to make itself aware of its own task, commitments, obligations and opportunities: the second, the

Church member recognising and fulfilling his responsibility to God as His steward of everything he is or has—life, time, talents, possessions, spiritual resources.

A study of the former of these movements will indicate the line along which there may be developed within the Church that informed interest which is so essential for efficient service: a study of the latter, the line for developing in the church member that sense of personal responsibility to God which leads to the utmost abandon in serving.

I

While all Churches in the modern world seek in a more or less casual, spasmodic and unsystematic way—by literature, conferences, pulpit addresses, instruction classes and study circles—to inform their members as to the nature of their tasks and the needs of the age, only a few have so far been led to adopt a comprehensive educational programme, directing the mind of their membership in a systematic and sustained way to the exigencies and opportunities of their denominational task.

Two of these are at present attracting world-wide attention by the elaborate way in which they are seeking to create throughout their membership an informed interest in the nature and opportunities of the service which they are rendering; and in embarking upon a policy so clearly essential to the attainment of a higher efficiency in the Church, they are blazing a trail along which other churches in their pursuit of a higher efficiency are bound to follow. One of these churches is in the United States of America: the other is in Scotland.

Movements Towards Higher Efficiency

The Progressive Programme of the Presbyterian Church in the United States has been in operation since 1917—sufficiently long to reveal its value as an instrument for raising the Church's spiritual efficiency. Its purpose is to diffuse a detailed knowledge of the Church's aims and activities into every corner of the Church; to call into active work the largest number of people possible ; to train office-bearers and church workers, since the Programme is the office-bearers' and church workers' official guide and insists on training classes at periodic intervals; and to quicken the spiritual life of the Church. To achieve this end the work of the denomination has been divided into seven departments, to the needs, problems and activities of each of which, the mind of the Church is systematically and continuously directed during stated periods in the course of the year.

Schemes of instruction and study, and suggested lines of practical endeavour, prepared by the Assembly's Plans and Programme Committee, adapted for use in the four congregational groups—the Men of the Church, the Woman's Auxiliary, the Sunday School and the Young People's Society, are put into operation in the participating congregations under the supervision of congregational leaders representing the seven departments of the Programme. The work of the Programme is arranged as follows :

I

Spiritual Life and Evangelism

September.

II

FOREIGN MISSIONS

January, February, May.

III

HOME MISSIONS

June, October, November.

IV

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND MINISTERIAL RELIEF

April, December.

V

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND PUBLICATION

July, October.

VI

STEWARDSHIP OF POSSESSIONS

February, March, November.

VII

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICE

August.

So satisfactory has the Presbyterian Progressive Programme proved to be that at the end of fourteen years' working it is authoritatively declared to be

indispensable. This, we may take it, indicates that it is successfully fulfilling the purpose for which it was designed, and this opinion is substantiated by the striking financial statistics of the Church during the period concerned. Since 1917 contributions to benevolences have increased 114 per cent.; contributions to current expenses have increased by 162 per cent.; total contributions have had an increase of 147 per cent. "This increase of 147 per cent., when compared with an increase in membership since 1917 of 27 per cent.," says Dr. Roswell C. Long, Secretary of the Assembly's Stewardship Department, "indicates the practical result of the organisation of the unified programme."

The Church of Scotland Forward Movement, 1931, undertaken in fulfilment of the high hopes with which the reunion of the Church of Scotland was consummated in 1929, is designed to bring the whole Church "to a greater consciousness of its task and a more sensitive conscience regarding the share which each must take in discharging it." The initiatory act of the Forward Movement will be the presentation of a considered Call to the whole Church, summoning every congregation and every member to a new awareness of the Church's task and of the power that is available to accomplish it.

The preparation of this Call has been entrusted to thirteen "Commissions of the Kingdom," which after reviewing the Church's commitments and opportunities will embody the result of their study in "A Call to the Service of the Kingdom" which they will convey to the Church at a representative Church Congress in Glasgow, October 26th to 30th, 1931, at provincial congresses of

shorter duration, and through a series of Missions of the Kingdom from Presbytery to Presbytery, and town to town.

The study of the Church's work which the Commissions are making, and which they will embody in the Call, is of the most exhaustive nature and is as follows :

1. Worship, Discipleship, and Fellowship.
2. Youth.
3. The Pastoral Care of the People of Scotland.
4. The Church's Impact on Society.
5. The Jews.
6. Our Fellow-Countrymen Overseas.
7. India.
8. China.
9. Africa.
10. Our Relations with other Countries.
11. The Supply and Training of Candidates for the Ministry.
12. Our Financial Resources.
13. The Church's Message.

It is quite evident from these impressive preparations that what is contemplated in the Forward Movement is much more than a mass demonstration of a few months' duration. The complex and exhaustive account of the Church at work which the Commissions of the Kingdom will present will demand sustained and systematic study throughout the whole Church before the new " awareness " of the Church's task, which is aimed at, is awakened in any permanent fashion in the membership. If the Forward Movement therefore is to fulfil its intention and succeed in bringing to

every member and every congregation of the Church of Scotland a deeper and more informed sense of the service which all are called to give, it will have to call forth an educational activity on the part of the Church of a new sort.

Is it too much to hope that before the movement spends itself the Commissions of the Kingdom will give place to a permanent Commission or Board of Education, charged with the continual and systematic direction of the Church's mind to the Church's aims, activities and resources; that "The Call to the Service of the Kingdom" will become "The Progressive Programme" of the Church of Scotland, graded and adapted to the congregational groups and kept continually up to date; and that the Missions of the Kingdom will pass into a permanent endeavour in General Assembly, Synods, Presbyteries and Parishes to reach the spiritual, educational and practical goals, which the Church's "Call" or "Programme" points to? Such a development would be fraught with great blessing for the Church of Scotland, enriching her spiritual life, extending the knowledge, enlarging the interest and deepening the sense of responsibility of her membership, and increasing her powers for service; and it would present on both sides of the Atlantic great Presbyterian churches which in pressing along the same educational avenue are leading the way in the quest for larger powers with which to serve the age.

II

The movement which has just been described is intimately related to another movement in the

Church to-day, which also aims at the attainment of a higher spiritual efficiency. At the close of the Great War the North American Churches became deeply concerned regarding the moral and spiritual reactions which followed upon the termination of hostilities, the danger to the spiritual life of the Church which excessive prosperity in a materialistic age entailed, and the inability of the Church to meet efficiently the overwhelming demands which the perils, opportunities and needs of the modern world make upon it. To meet this situation recourse was had to a Christian principle,[1] long dormant in the mind of the Church, which the exigencies of the time rediscovered.

Christian Stewardship—the recognition and fulfilment of one's responsibility to God as steward of everything he is and has—life, time, talents, possessions and spiritual resources—was seen to provide just the ideal, motive and discipline which both the perils and the need of the age required.

A Christian steward assumes a two-fold responsibility. He holds himself obliged (1) to discharge zealously the trust which his Master has delegated to him, viz., the advancement of the Kingdom of God in his own life and in the world, and (2) to use to the best advantage in the service of the Kingdom his own powers, privileges and possessions. Christian Stewardship thus constrains to the fullest consecration, and gives promise that a Church in which the principle is generally accepted and practised by the members will show a high degree of spiritual power. The time was ripe for teaching

[1] The Supreme Principle of Christian Stewardship is discussed in Part II, Chapter VI, iii, pages 152-156.

of this sort. The Stewardship Movement made rapid progress over the whole of North America, making itself felt in every one of the Protestant Churches. "That there was need for such a movement is proved by the remarkable success which has attended it. It has breathed the breath of a new life into the dry bones of our ecclesiastical organisations. Wherever Stewardship is thoughtfully preached our Churches are prospering."[1]

This happy result has not been achieved without drastic reorganisation. Both for the propaganda and the practice of Stewardship, Stewardship Churches have instituted Stewardship departments, and organised for Stewardship in their various courts or councils and in all their congregations.

A Church's Stewardship Department has two principal functions. It promotes Stewardship teaching throughout the denomination; and for the sake of efficient Stewardship-service it plans and seeks to carry through an educational programme, which aims at making the Stewardship member aware of the aims and activities of the cause which he has pledged himself to serve. A Church's educational programme has thus a close relationship to its Stewardship policy. So far, educational programmes have sprung out of the Stewardship Movement, and exist to promote and assist Stewardship service. The Presbyterian Progressive Programme of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, for example, was instituted in 1917 when the Stewardship Revival was well on its way.

[1] Rev. Luther E. Lovejoy, D.D., President United Stewardship Council, United States of America. See *Church Finance To-day : The Proceedings of the World Conference on Church Finance.* Glasgow, June, 1928, page 82.

It is directed by the Assembly's Stewardship Department, and is expressly designed to extend and promote the acceptance and practice of Stewardship among the Church's membership. Undoubtedly it is because the Presbyterian Progressive Programme is so closely associated with Stewardship aims that it has achieved the measure of success referred to above.

The promotion of Christian Stewardship has made but little headway on this side of the Atlantic. In the British Churches as yet the Stewardship Movement is only commencing; none of them is actually organised for the promotion of Stewardship; and none of them so far has an educational programme which definitely aims at raising the spiritual efficiency of its members through the inculcation of Stewardship principles. In the general mind Stewardship is still associated almost exclusively, in its narrower aspect, with the use of money, instead of with *the whole range of man's accountability.* The misconception that it is a money-raising device blinds the average British Churchman to its true significance as the principle on which daily life must be organised in order to be fully Christian. Seeing, therefore, that the rising tide of materialism is as menacing, and the overwhelming demand of the Christian enterprise as clamant, on this side of the Atlantic as anywhere else, there is no task quite so imperative for us to-day as that of clarifying this great idea and bringing it home to the conscience both of the churches and of church-members.

The Stewardship Movement in North America and in the Mission Field has quite clearly demonstrated that the promotion of Christian Stewardship

among the Church's membership is the key to the solution of the Church's primary problem. Accordingly, Churches which would go forward to-day must needs give the question of Stewardship their most prayerful consideration. To many, it is true, Stewardship will appear rather quixotic as an expedient for raising the Church's spiritual efficiency; but in reality it is the soundest of methods, since it is simply Christian discipleship pressed to its fullest consecration. A Church which aims at that, which organises itself and adopts an educational programme for the promotion of Stewardship, and in which Stewardship principles are practised by the membership, will attain a higher spiritual efficiency and that of a much more permanent kind than it would if it simply relied, as at present, upon spasmodic evangelism. Indeed, the promise which Stewardship teaching, organisation and practice hold out for the permanent attainment by the Church of a higher efficiency in counteracting the perilous tendencies and meeting the desperate needs of the age, prompts the final question—should not the propagation of Stewardship practice among church-members be the ultimate goal of Forward Movements on the part of all Churches in the world of to-day ?

INDEX

Age, character of the, 19 f., 46 f., 67 f., 74
Anglicanism, distinctive elements of, 96
Anglican Churches, organisation of, 99, 111 f.
Anglican Churches in Great Britain and Ireland, 111 f.
Anglican Orders, 109 f.
Assembly of the Church of England, National, 99, 111
Assembly, General, 50, 101, 120, 121
Assembly : Congregational, 103 ; Baptist, 103, 125

Baptists, their distinctive contribution, 97
Baptist Churches, organisation of, 101 f., 124
Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 125
Barrier Act, 120
Brooks, Phillips, 173

Chalmers, Dr., 37, 133, 159
Chapter, the, 99, 109, 112, 114
Church : its primary problem, 26 f., 187 ; its educational enterprise, 32 f.; its ministry of service, 35 f. ; its complex task, 48 f. ; its overseas enterprise, 49, 107 ; its coming victory, 66, 69 f. ; the true soul of the world, 84 ; the Body of Christ, 85 f. ; and spiritual nurture, 86 ; and evangelism, 69, 88, 107 ; and politics, 89, 108 ; and world redemption, 90 ; its heritage and distinctive testimony, 94 f.
Church Body : Governing, 113 ; Representative, 114, 115
Church Meeting, 102, 121, 124
Church member, the ideal, 29 f.
Church polity, types of, 98
Churchwarden, 113, 115, 117, 118, 138
Church worker, *see under* Office-Bearer.
Church of Scotland, 119 f., 181 f.
Circuit, 104, 125 f.
Class leader, 43, 50, 103 f., 125, 138
Coffin, Henry Sloane, 36, 133-135
Conference : Anglican, 100, 112-114 ; Wesleyan Methodist, 105, 126
Congregation : its functions, 129 f. ; principles which govern, 131 f. ; its atmosphere, 140 f.
Congregationalism, distinctive elements of, 97
Congregational Churches, organisation of, 101 f., 121 f.
Congregational Union of England and Wales, 102, 123, 125
Convocation, 99, 111

Index

Council: Diocesan, 100, 115, 117; Parochial Church, 100, 112, 114; Consultative Church, 99, 116; Representative Church, 100, 116; of Congregational Union, 103; of Baptist Union, 125
Courts: Episcopal, 113-115, 117; Presbyterian, 100 f., 119-121; Congregational, 122; Baptist, 124; Wesleyan, 104 f., 125 f.

Deacon: Anglican, 99, 110; Presbyterian, 51, 100, 138; Congregational, 102, 122, 138; Baptist, 102
Deaconess, 117, 125
Deacons' Court: Presbyterian, 100, 119; Congregational, 102, 122; Baptist, 102, 124
Denominationalism, 36, 93 f.

Education: Adult, 34; in the congregation, 129, 136
Educational enterprise of the Church, 32 f.
Educational Programme for Youth, 107
Efficiency, defined, 25
Efficiency, demand for; in industry etc., 20 f.; in the Church, 22 f., 45 f.; in Office-Bearers, 46 f.
Elder: Presbyterian, 50, 60, 97, 100, 138; Congregational, 122; Baptist, 124
Episcopacy, *see under* Anglicanism.
Evangelism, 49, 64, 88, 107, 130, 187

Foreign Missions, 49, 72 f., 107, 137
Forward Movement, Church of Scotland, 181 f.
Fosdick, H. E., 61, 77
Fox, George, 61
Franciscan Movement, 41, 77
Freewill Offering System, 51, 146 f.

Grenfell, W.T., 58

Holy Spirit, The, 23, 29 f., 38, 48, 76-78, 82, 141, 171 f.
Home Missions, 107, 130

Inge, Dean, 68
Inner Light, the, 97

Jerusalem International Missionary Council — Report on Education, 35

Kidd, Benjamin, 32
Kirk Session, 101, 119
Knowledge, effect of the new, 48, 75

Lay Elector, 118
Lay Episcopal Elector, 118
Lay leaders and workers, function of, 40 f.
Lay Reader, 117
Lay Representative, 99, 118
Leaders' Meeting, 104, 125 f.
Livingstone, David, 62
Local preacher, 43, 103, 126

Maintenance of Ministry, 106
Major, Principal, H.D.A., 84
Manager: Presbyterian, 100, 119; Congregational, 122
Marx, Karl, 49
Materialism, 46 f.
Methodism, distinctive elements of, 97
Methodist Churches, organisation of, 103 f., 125 f.
Methodist Church (1932), 125
Moderator: Presbyterian, 119; Congregational, 123

Index

Moody, D.L., 58
Müller, George, 171

Office-Bearer: indispensable in Church, 43 f.; demand for efficiency in, 46 f.; his spiritual experience, 56; his objectives, 57 f.; his equipment, 60 f.; his characteristic traits, 63 f.; the grounds of his confidence, 69 f.; his conception of the Church, 80; his knowledge of his own Church, 93 f.; his congregational aims, 135 f.; his community service, 137, 157 f.; his use of the vote, 162; his advocacy of great causes, 163; his Christian integrity, 166; his self-training, 167 f.; his care of his inner life, 169 f.

Prayer, 62, 169, 172, 173
Presbyterianism, distinctive elements of, 97
Presbyterian Churches, organisation of, 100 f.; 119 f.
Presbyterian Progressive Programme, The, 179 f.
Presbyters, parity of, 97, 100
Presbytery, the, 50, 101, 119
Principles governing: Churches activities, 105; congregational efficiency, 231 f.; Christian giving, 144 f.; church finance, 146 f.
Progress of the age, 68, 71 f.

Quakers, their distinctive contribution, 97
Quarterly Circuit Meeting, 104, 126

Rainy, Principal, 101
Reformation, the, 41, 77
Revival, religious, 76 f.
Science in the modern world, 74 f.
Second Book of Discipline, The, 59, 100
Service: community, 36, 130, 137, 157 f.; social and recreational, 131, 137
Session, *see under* Kirk Session.
Session: Pastoral, 105, 126 f. Representative, *ibid*
Social problems, Church's method of solving, 108
Social unrest, effect on church worker's task, 49
Stanley, H.M., 62
Statistics: Church of Scotland, 43; Wesleyan Methodist Church, 43; Presbyterian Church in U.S.A., 181; Missions, in India, 72, 74; in Africa, 72; in China, 73; World's Mission Fields, 73
Stewards: Society, Poor and Circuit, 104, 125 f.
Stewardship, Christian, 152 f., 183 f.
Stewardship Movement, *ibid*
Synod: Anglican, 99, 112-116; Presbyterian, 50, 101, 120; Wesleyan Methodist, 104, 126

Trustee: Presbyterian, 100, 119; Methodist, 104, 126

Unions, Congregational and Baptist: County or District, 102, 123, 124; National, 102 f., 123, 125

Vestry, 100, 113, 114, 115, 117

Wesley's Deed of Declaration, 105
Women Office-bearers and Church workers, 117-119, 125
Worship, 86, 129, 131, 136, 170

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